

The Nation and The Athenæum

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All communications (accompanied by a stamped envelope for return) should be addressed to the Editor, THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM, 38, Great James Street, W.C.1.

EVENTS OF THE WEEK

MR. CHURCHILL based his first Budget on a liberal estimate of the buoyancy of the revenue. This year he seems to have put that buoyancy very low indeed. Perhaps this means that the apparent vindication in the revenue returns of his optimism of last year was more apparent than real, and that a good deal more "wangling" than meets the eye was needed to keep the realized deficit within the bounds of £14 millions. It also reflects the fact that owing to the higher exchange-value of sterling, resulting from the return to gold, the national income measured in money is not increasing so fast as the real national income; an explanation which Members of Parliament would do well to remember when they point to the diminished buoyancy of the revenue as proof that we are over-taxed. But, even so, we suspect that Mr. Churchill has deliberately estimated on the low side, in order to have more margin for emergency than it is prudent to display. On paper he is keeping only £3 millions in hand for the purpose of extended coal subsidy and other coal demands. But there is a strong likelihood that he will have to find considerably more than that; and he is probably in a position to do so, assuming that a disastrous stoppage is avoided.

The chance of a coal stoppage is, of course, a high one; and, though Mr. Churchill professes to leave this possibility out of account in his reckonings, it constitutes the decisive justification for the surprise feature of his Budget, the increase of the sinking fund by £10 millions during the present year. If a stoppage occurs, declares Mr. Churchill, he will have to propose supplementary taxation. But additional taxation, imposed at what *ex hypothesi* would be a time of serious industrial confusion, would really be exposed to very serious objections; and it would be difficult in such circumstances to justify paying off debt at more than the normal rate.

But Mr. Churchill will be able to incur a nominal deficit of £10 millions, while leaving the repayment of debt at its normal figure; and it is in this light, as a reserve which can in effect be drawn on for revenue purposes in a serious emergency but not otherwise, that it is most practical to regard the £10 millions. Unquestionably, Mr. Churchill has done well to increase the Sinking Fund rather than to reduce the income tax, a step which would have transformed the Economy Bill into a glaring social outrage.

Interest in the Budget is mainly concentrated on the betting-tax. With the principle of taxing betting we are, as we have previously indicated, in entire agreement. It seems to us to stand exactly on a par with the case of drink; and those who welcome the heavy taxation of drink, recognizing that it makes, as it undoubtedly does, for temperance, and yet are outraged at the notion of taxing betting, because it implies that the State will be making money out of vice, are drawing a distinction which it is no doubt possible to defend, but which is none the less highly paradoxical and unconvincing. The objection that the State will be for the first time recognizing the existence of the evil thing leaves us entirely cold. To refuse to recognize a fact, however undesirable that fact may be, is always silly. Unless you are prepared to suppress a bad thing, and no one expects the State ever to suppress betting, the sensible course is to recognize it, and discourage it, as a betting-tax will certainly do.

The expediency of the Government's proposal is, however, another matter. If we are to tax betting, it is impossible to leave the question of street betting where it is. Mr. Churchill stated the present position quite accurately. Except on the race-course, "cash betting is illegal, and the police are charged with the duty of

repressing it." But "there is both wholesale evasion and occasional connivance, and the law is brought into disrepute." That position Mr. Churchill proposes to leave exactly as it is, and to confine himself to taxing the betting that is not illegal. But the matter cannot be left at that. The taxing of legal betting places a premium on illegal betting; and when the latter is indulged in, an evasion of the revenue will be added to the offence against the existing law. It will thus be impossible to treat "wholesale evasion and occasional connivance" with our present complacency. In these circumstances, the Government can hardly go on saying, "We mean to harry street betting, just about as much as it is harried at present, but no more." They will have to face the question whether they mean to enforce the law seriously or not; and the issue of removing the ban on street betting and taxing it too will soon arise. This question ought to have been faced before the tax was imposed; but Mr. Churchill presumably calculates that it will be easier politically to leave it to be raised by the logic of events.

* * *

Mr. Churchill has made, as was expected, a substantial raid upon the Road Fund. He transfers to the Exchequer £7 millions of the accumulated fund, and couples this with a permanent provision that the State shall receive one-third of the duties on private motor-cars and cycles, which will give him this year another £3½ millions. He has, however, also provided for a substantial increase in the duties on heavy commercial vehicles, the proceeds of which will accrue to the Road Fund. This change is highly desirable in itself; for, at present, the duties which commercial vehicles pay do not cover more than a fraction of the damage they do the roads, and they are thus subsidized in competition with the railways, partly at the expense of the latter as ratepayers. Moreover, this change means a substantial compensation to the Road Fund for the raid upon it; and, as pleasure cars are obviously a legitimate object of "luxury" taxation, Mr. Churchill's arrangement may be accepted, we think, as a reasonable one in the circumstances. Further minor Protectionist imposts are the chief remaining feature of the Budget.

* * *

A new batch of reports by Safeguarding Committees was issued at the end of last week. On the whole they were merciful to a Chancellor of the Exchequer who is still presumably a convinced Free Trader. The Worsteds Committee reported that

"the applicants have failed to substantiate a case for the imposition of a duty, inasmuch as we find that the evidence upon the vital question of unemployment does not support the view that employment in the industry is being seriously affected by the volume of retained imports."

A remarkable feature of this inquiry was that the application for a duty was opposed by the Textile Trade Unions on behalf of the workpeople engaged in the industry. In these circumstances it would have been rather scandalous if the decision had been in favour of protection, especially as Mr. Ernest Bevin was a member of the Committee. The door was, however, held open by the other two members of the Committee for a 12½ per cent. duty, "if seriously increased unemployment in the industry arising from a substantial increase in the volume of retained imports be accompanied by an increase in the bounty obtained by foreign manufacturers as a result of further currency depreciation."

* * *

The Committee on Enamelled Hollow-ware produced a half-hearted report which contained no recom-

mendation either way. As no tax on imports of these articles was proposed in the Budget, we presume that the application has failed. The Committee on the Safeguarding of Industries Act, Part I., on the other hand, reported definitely in favour of the retention of protection for "key-industries," and proposed in particular that the duties on imported optical glass and instruments should be increased from thirty-three and one-third per cent. to fifty per cent. This proposal is included in the Budget, which also contains a sixteen and two-thirds per cent. tax on imported wrapping-paper, introduced last autumn but withdrawn then on account of Parliamentary pressure. This wrapping-paper duty is the one fruit of the safeguarding regulations which Mr. Churchill brought forward on Monday. It is a wretched specimen of what that tree can yield. Wrapping-paper is essentially a raw material. The tax will produce but little revenue, but it will seriously interfere with the operation of those industries, such as chocolate-making, in which wrapping-paper is a considerable item in the total cost of production.

* * *

Lord Buckmaster won a considerable victory over those who wish to withhold vital information from the poor, by carrying his birth-control motion in the House of Lords last Wednesday. The terms of his resolution, to which attention was called in a letter published in these columns last week, were as follows:—

"That his Majesty's Government be requested to withdraw all instructions given to, or conditions imposed on, welfare committees for the purpose of causing such committees to withhold from married women in their district information when sought by such women as to the best means of limiting their families."

This was carried by 57 votes to 44, in spite of the fact that the Government Whips were put on against it.

* * *

The debate in the House of Lords was remarkable for the large attendance of peers. At scarcely any point in the discussion were there fewer than one hundred in the Chamber. Lord Buckmaster's appeal was based on the injustice of withholding from the poor information which the rich already had, and of which some of the poor were desperately in need. It is doubtful if his eloquence alone would have carried the debate. The day was won for him by the poverty and lack of co-ordination in the arguments of his opponents. Lord Salisbury made no attempt to rebut Lord Buckmaster's arguments. He merely announced that the Government Whips were to be put on in defence of the welfare centres, whose workers would be alienated if the motion were carried. The Archbishop of Canterbury based his opposition upon the opposite assumption. He could not see any need for the resolution at all. He denied that information was withheld when it was needed on medical grounds. This gave Lord Russell the opportunity of pointing out the discrepancy between the two arguments. "If it is a fact," he asked the Archbishop of Canterbury, "that there is an embargo, are you going to vote for the embargo, or against its removal?" Finally, the Lord Chancellor, obviously ignorant of the subject and the motion, gave Lord Buckmaster the opportunity of taunting the Government, by offering them every reservation they had demanded, and stating his conviction that they still would not withdraw their opposition. Nor did they.

* * *

The contents of the Russo-German treaty have now been revealed. We had anticipated that the Russian negotiators had merely endeavoured to secure for them-

selves the same privileges with regard to neutrality and arbitration that Germany had given to the Locarno signatories; but the new treaty goes beyond this. If either of the contracting parties is attacked by a third party, or by a coalition which endeavours to impose an economic or financial boycott, then the other will remain neutral. The purpose of these clauses is explained in two notes signed by Herr Stresemann and M. Krestinsky. The article with regard to an economic boycott, the former explains, does not relieve Germany of the duty of collaborating in the economic sanctions provided for by Article 16 of the Covenant; but the question whether Russia or a third party at war with her is to be regarded as the aggressor State "could only be decided with binding force for Germany" with Germany's own consent. If an anti-Soviet combination is formed within the League, Germany undertakes to oppose it "most energetically."

* * *

The terms of the treaty and of the explanatory notes are, of course, being anxiously scrutinized all over Europe, and especially in Paris, Warsaw, and Prague. It is obvious that from the Russian point of view the whole object of the treaty must be to diminish the effect of Locarno and of Germany's adhesion to the League and to preclude, as far as possible, the use of economic sanctions against Russia. Herr Stresemann has, however, been careful to avoid any formal inconsistency between the obligations undertaken in the new treaty and those implied in the Covenant and the Locarno agreements. He has removed by his covering letter the ambiguity which might be found in Article 3 of the treaty. Economic sanctions cannot, in any case, be regarded as readily applicable by the League to a vast State which has not adhered to the Covenant, and the assurances now given by Germany to Russia only oblige her to act in the way in which she inevitably would act if a collision were to occur between the League and the Soviets. If France and her allies are alarmed to see Germany and Russia drawing closer together, they may realize more clearly the folly of delaying Germany's admission to the League; and if Germany can act as an intermediary between Russia and the League, positive good may come out of this rather dubious pact.

* * *

It is extremely difficult to ascertain from a mass of contradictory reports what progress is actually being made in the Moroccan negotiations. It is said that the preliminary French advance has been arranged locally by the substitution of regular troops for friendly tribal forces, and that one of the chief obstacles to a settlement has thereby been overcome; but the main weakness of the Franco-Spanish position is that, even if a peace be signed, the terms proposed seem to preclude any chance of a permanent settlement. The unarmed tribesmen will be at the mercy of armed tribesmen on the French and Spanish frontiers; and we may be certain that they will not be unarmed for long. The French appear to be adopting the old Spanish system of supporting a native nominee—who in this instance is Sidi Mohammed Azerkane; but this system is already utterly discredited. How many times was Raisuli an ally and an enemy of the Spanish Government? The Allies had the choice between attempting a permanent and effective occupation of the Riff or recognizing such authority as existed in it. They have done neither; and their middle course of negotiating direct with the tribes and demanding the withdrawal of Abd-el-Krim is not likely to steer them past their difficulties.

The Hindu-Moslem riots in Calcutta, and the rigour of the methods adopted by the authorities for their suppression, make together the gravest situation of the kind that has arisen in India for a generation. Beginning in March, before the month of Ramadan, the disturbances broke out afresh at intervals during April, and a week ago they entered upon a stage of appalling extent and ferocity. On April 27th machine-guns were brought into operation for the first time, and as a consequence the casualties reached a terrible total. The official returns at that time gave 43 killed and 373 wounded; but it is admitted that these are very far below the actual figures, since large numbers of bodies are hurried away to the burning-ghat. The immediate causes of the conflict, apart from what Lord Olivier has called bad religious manners, remain obscure; but it may safely be said that the efforts of Sir Michael O'Dwyer and his friends to fix the responsibility upon the authors of the Reform Constitution are merely fantastic. We note that, while the Indian Liberals of Bengal were urging the immediate summoning of the Legislative Council, Lord Lytton, the Governor, telegraphed from Darjeeling that the Government "continues to review the situation hourly and from every point of view." From a later message it appears that Lord Lytton, in response to appeals and taunts, has returned to Calcutta from his summer capital in the hills and ordered troops to reinforce the police.

* * *

According to the latest reports from Washington, the United States Government does not intend to drop the blockade claims against Great Britain, and may suggest a reference of the whole question to arbitration. Senator Borah, to keep the question alive, has given an interview to the *Washington Star*, in which he seems to suggest that the claims are not concerned with demurrage and delay in paying settlements arising out of prize-court judgments, but are for alleged definite breaches of international law. The Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, speaking presumably with the responsibility attaching to a semi-official utterance, makes the rather astonishing suggestion that not a single cargo properly liable to condemnation as contraband was shipped from the United States prior to American intervention in the war. On this basis the claims must be colossal. Until the controversy has taken more definite shape, it would be useless to argue points of international jurisprudence with Senator Borah; but we believe the British case to be strong in law as well as in equity.

* * *

There is a pathetic atmosphere about the all-night sittings which occur on the annual estimates of the L.C.C. All the old issues so vital to a well-ordered administration of London have now been appropriated by the London Labour Party. The progress of time has turned the demand for steamboats on the Thames into one for motor-boats, but otherwise all the issues remain exactly as they were when Lord Jessel and the millionaire Press first started their alliance to frustrate progress in London government. Most of the amendments point to the need for the Council to initiate Parliamentary action. The opposition is still demanding that the Council shall become the market authority for London, that it shall have powers to run omnibuses and tubes, to tax land values and empty properties, and to take over the administration of the City Corporation's Bridge House Estate Fund. But in the view of the leaders of the Municipal Reform Party, "the time is still not opportune for the Council to initiate action."

THE PROBLEM OF THE COALOWNERS

THE public has become inured to threats of formidable strikes and takes them nowadays very lightly. That you need not despair if the day appointed for a stoppage draws near, with employers and employed apparently poles apart and making no progress towards agreement; that it is still as likely as not that a way out will be found at the very last moment; such comfortable reflections have become part of the national philosophy. And, up to a point, their reasonableness is undeniable. Certainly, as these big industrial disputes are handled, there is never a chance of a settlement until the last moment; and it became evident at an early stage of the present coal crisis that this rule would apply. Whether we shall get a settlement then is, however, another matter. The public confidently assumes that we shall, chiefly because trouble was averted last July after the outlook had seemed equally hopeless. But the sagacity of the public composure was vindicated then by a singular piece of statecraft which cannot be repeated. It is fruitless to speculate; but the probability seems to us a high one that we shall be plunged, either before these lines appear in print or after a brief respite, into a struggle for which the public mind is still almost as unprepared as it would have been last summer.

Whatever the outcome, the course of the negotiations raises very serious reflections. It is often said that no man is written down except by himself. The criticisms of the present régime in the coal mines, which have been endorsed by a prolonged series of public inquiries, have probably done less to convince the public of the inadequacy of the mine-owners than has their own demeanour during the past few weeks. The crux of the problem, ever since last summer, has been to induce the miners to accept a substantial reduction in wages, which, though not outrageously low, are, on the other hand, by no means high. No one can be expected to accept a reduction of wages cheerfully; and the reductions which the miners must accept are heavy. An average of 10 per cent. was what the Commission indicated; and this would mean more than 10 per cent. in many districts; and the wages, as we have said, are not high at present. Anyone with a spark of imaginative sympathy can realize how appalling this prospect must seem to the miners, how easy it is for them to react into a desperate, reckless mood of blind refusal, how formidable a task it is to induce them to accept it. That has been the task which has confronted us throughout the past year, and which confronts us still. What is the spirit in which this task is best approached?

The owners appear to have no doubts. The right spirit in their view is the spirit of the "hard bargainer." The first principle of the bargaining art is that you must ask for a great deal more than you expect to get. The second principle is that you must be extremely stubborn about making any concession, even such concessions as the other party knows from the beginning that you really mean to make, in the hope of persuading him when you do make them that you have reached the end of your concessions; that before you reach this point you must break off negotiations once or twice, and generally behave as though you were by no means anxious for agreement. The owners have acted on these principles throughout. They refused to discuss wages nationally, although perfectly well aware that they would have to do so in the end, and persisted in this refusal until within three days of a stoppage. Meanwhile, they presented demands in the districts which go enormously beyond the 10 per cent. average reduction, which is the utmost that they can hope to obtain. Only in the

Federated Area is the demand kept down to 10 per cent., and there it is subject to conditions. In Scotland it is about 20 per cent.; in South Wales, Northumberland, and Durham it is fully 25 per cent. Not for a moment, of course, did the owners suppose that these demands would be accepted; but this was, in their view, the best way of persuading the miners to agree to reductions on the scale indicated by the Commission.

In thus handling the matter the owners would claim, of course, to know best the psychology of the men they are dealing with. They would point out that bluff is common form in wage negotiations, that both sides habitually indulge in it, that it causes no particular ill-feeling, and that in the present instance, with their formula of "not a penny off," the Miners' Federation have been bluffing, too. Up to a point this is quite true. In disputes of an ordinary character, presenting no great inherent difficulty, and not arousing very deep passions, the owners' methods are no doubt sound enough from their point of view. But the present dispute is not an ordinary one. The magnitude of the wage sacrifice demanded of the miners stirs strong feeling, and after feeling has reached a certain point of intensity it is not possible for the miners' leaders, even if that was their original intention, to eat *their* words at the last moment. Moreover, any settlement which is to embrace different reductions in different districts will be a complex settlement. It will take time to negotiate, for there is an obvious probability that the rates for some districts will still be in dispute when those for others have been agreed to. After the parties have got down to business, the possibilities of rupture will still be numerous and serious. And the chances of success will not be improved by the atmosphere of pugnacity, suspicion, and excitement created by the long-drawn-out, unreal preliminaries.

The owners pursued these tactics last summer, and they failed conspicuously then; hence the appointment of the Coal Commission. In repeating the same tactics to-day they have assumed a heavy responsibility, far heavier than they seem to realize. The trade unions are often accused, and justly, of far too great a readiness to employ the dangerous weapon of a strike designed to hold up the life of the community. But in the present crisis the owners have exhibited an equal indifference to the public interest in the maintenance of peace. Because they judged that an obstinate attitude would improve the terms they would get, if a settlement were reached, they have deliberately run an increased risk of rupture. By their tactics, moreover, they have sensibly increased the chance of the railwaymen and other workers coming out in support of the miners, and have thus greatly added to the public peril.

The mentality of the owners constitutes a serious problem, for which no solution is to be found in the Report of the Coal Commission. On economic and technical grounds, the case against nationalization of any sort or any grandiose plan of "unification" of the collieries is, in our judgment, overwhelming. The best administrative unit for coal production is comparatively small. But the attitude of the owners raises a serious doubt whether such considerations can be held to decide the issue. It is ceasing to be tolerable that we should have every year or two the threat of a general stoppage in the coalfields, entailing a serious blow to the national prosperity, imperilling the whole social order, and that our destinies on these occasions should be entrusted in effect to men so narrow, so obstinate, and so irresponsible as the owners appear to be. Doubtless the owners are not really as bad as they seem under the present leadership of the Mining Association, which does less than justice to the capacity and insight of many of its members. But, unless more statesmanlike elements can assert themselves, it will be necessary to contemplate more drastic reforms than those sketched out by the Coal Commission.

INDUSTRY AND THE INCOME-TAX

IT is fashionable to assume that taxes, like the income-tax, are a serious handicap to industry. Trade depression is attributed to the high level of direct taxation, and if trade is more active in France or Italy or some other country, the explanation usually given is that taxes are lower there than here. Mr. Snowden, on Tuesday, ventured to challenge this doctrine, stating it as in his view incontrovertible that "income-tax, falling on profits, unlike local rates, is not a burden on industry." To Mr. Ronald McNeill, Mr. Snowden's contention came as a startling paradox, which he evidently thought had never been advanced before.

"I am a very humble-minded man," said Mr. McNeill, "and I want to learn from the right hon. Gentleman, but it is a startling proposition. I was brought up to believe the contrary; most of us have been. Almost every book on economics and taxation that I have read has taught me the opposite."

Mr. McNeill must have been comforted by an elaborate restatement of the conventional doctrine which followed later from Mr. Hilton Young:—

"To what is the depression of trade due? It is due to the high cost of production which is the natural consequence of over-taxation. To what is the struggle to maintain a standard of living among the wage-earners due? Again it is due to this great and universal evil of over-taxation which causes unemployment. . . . By over-taxation we are led into a vicious circle. That is, one in which high taxation produces subsidies and subsidies produce, in their turn, high taxation."

Now Mr. Snowden's proposition was no fantastic eccentricity; it does not run counter to a consensus of economic authority; in its broad outline (and Mr. Snowden admitted later the need for qualification) it is, in our view, sound. It represents, that is to say, the larger part of the truth. Many people are led astray on this matter by a simple confusion. They think of the money they have had to pay in income-tax, and they reflect that, if it had not been taken from them, they would either have spent it or invested it or used it to extend their business, helping in one or other of these ways to increase the demand for commodities and for the labour required to make them. They ignore the fact that the Government, after all, does something with the money. It too spends it, whether wisely or unwisely, whether on armaments or social services, in ways that lead directly or indirectly to a demand for labour. In short, this particular objection to taxation, which rests on the reduction of spending-power, is a complete fallacy, for there is no reduction, but merely a transference of spending power. It is a fallacy which cancels out with its opposite number that a random increase of Government expenditure is positively good for trade.

It does not follow that taxes are no burden to industry. The Government may spend the money less productively than the taxpayer would have done; or the process of transferring it may involve a serious deterrent to industry and enterprise. Many taxes are exposed to grave objection under the latter head; local rates, for example, which penalize building, or employers' contributions to insurance schemes, which penalize employment. But the income-tax is remarkably free from this class of objection, for the reason given by Mr. Snowden, namely, that it is only levied where profits have actually been earned, and does not make it more difficult to earn them. This at least is the case in principle. In practice, the income-tax involves various incidental anomalies which are detrimental to business. Moreover, in so far as the income-tax falls on business reserves, there is a presumption that the money taken will be less productively employed. But this does not apply to the great bulk of the money raised; and if the choice is between an increase in sickness benefits or a few pence saved on the income-tax, the presumption is, we believe, on the whole the other way about.

General reasoning of this nature fails, however, to convince, because the holder of the conventional view

imagines that the facts are on his side. Taxation has been high since the war; and trade has been bad. That seems to him conclusive. The state of trade, this was virtually Mr. Hilton Young's argument, *proves* that we cannot afford an £800 million Budget. Here we see how false ideas take root, and grave practical mistakes may result, owing to the persistent tendency to ignore the effects of currency. After all, if we are to appeal to facts, to what moral do they point? Mr. Churchill did not increase the income-tax last year. He reduced it. At the same time he did another thing. He restored the gold standard. It is possible to argue that this step was a wise one on a balance of considerations; it is not possible to argue that it did not add to the difficulties of the export trades, which are precisely those whose state is serious to-day.

It is not our purpose now to discuss the gold question, or to answer Mr. Churchill's references to the subject, a task which was admirably performed by Mr. Pethick-Lawrence. But we make this observation. It is often said that the step having been taken, it is no use complaining of it now. No; but there is great need to recognize its effects, in order that we may not attribute them falsely to other causes, and, thus deluded, pursue a retrograde economic policy, calculated to embitter class-feeling and to provoke a dangerous reaction.

ABYSSINIA

THE NEXT VICTIM OF THE IMPERIALISTS

By LIEUT.-COMMANDER J. M. KENWORTHY.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI has informed the Italian people that their future lies in Africa. These lectures have caused a greater, or less, degree of alarm and uncertainty in France and Britain as the principal possessors of the parts of Africa not yet held by the Italians. But the cat has been let out of the bag by the news of the "conversations" between the British and Italian Governments concerning the future of the last independent African State. Abyssinia, having survived the European scramble for territory in Africa in the closing years of the last century, has become a full member of the League of Nations. Christianity, also, was introduced into the country in the third century A.D., and has flourished there ever since. And although Moslem missionaries have from time to time penetrated the country and made converts, there have been no European missionaries to suffer wrong and furnish a convenient excuse for invasions of Abyssinian territory.

But although Christian, the Abyssinian Government is not of the beneficent nature of, for example, the Italian Government. Nor is it an autocracy like the Spanish Government. A case could therefore be made out for imposing the blessings of Fascist rule on the Abyssinians if Italian arms can reverse the defeat of Adowa of thirty years ago, the League of Nations itself be bamboozled or coerced, and Sir Austen Chamberlain's remaining scruples overcome.

In 1906 an agreement was entered into between France, Italy, and England, foreshadowing the present situation, and with the usual talk of spheres of influence. And as this agreement solemnly bound all three Powers concerned "to maintain intact the integrity of Ethiopia," we may be quite certain it was a prelude to the final conquest, annexation, and partition of that country. Whenever strong Powers bind themselves to maintain the integrity of weaker neighbours it is always taken in the other Chancelleries of the world to mean that they have marked out the spoils for division amongst themselves and are warning off all other plunderers. The stories of Persia, Morocco, and Korea are recent examples.

Indeed, it is becoming the traditional policy of Downing Street to satisfy restless, aggressive, thrusting Powers by gifts of other people's property. Did we not attempt to buy off Russia by granting her a sphere of influence in, and virtual possession of, Northern Persia? Was it not seriously contemplated giving the Portuguese African Colonies to Germany before the War? And so, as Signor Mussolini is determined to distract attention from internal affairs in Italy by Imperialistic adventures in Africa, it is in accord with the new tradition to offer him the territory of a fellow-member of the League of Nations! When the final negotiations are concluded and the division of the spoils decided upon, the solemn farce of depositing the public items of the agreement with the Secretariat of the League of Nations will, of course, be enacted.

For this will be the final outcome. *Unless the French veto is effective*, Italy will be given leave to construct a railway joining her poor, barren colony of Eritrea with her even poorer and more barren colony of Somaliland through Abyssinian territory. The rest will follow according to plan. If Abyssinia ventures to object, so much the worse for her. The Abyssinians, especially the mountaineers, are good fighters; but when they handsomely defeated the Italian armies at Adowa, aeroplanes and poison gas were not yet the recognized weapons of civilization.

As for England, we shall be satisfied if the northern part of Abyssinia through which flow the upper waters of the Blue Nile is placed under our tutelage. This is important from the point of view of the irrigation of the Sudan, and, but for Italy, we might be content with an economic concession for the control of these waters without too great an infringement of Abyssinian sovereignty. A further great irrigation scheme has been worked out in connection with Lake Tsana, and plans for it have long been pigeon-holed in the British Foreign Office.

The country is a rich prize. Its population is about five millions, excellent coffee is produced, some of which finds its way across the Red Sea to be sold as Mocha coffee from Arabia, the mountain districts are healthy, and gold, silver, iron, and coal are found in considerable quantities. No signs of petroleum deposits have been found, so America can hardly be appealed to to safeguard the liberty of the last independent people in Africa. The Government is admittedly weak, and there is a real grievance felt by the British nation in the continued raiding for slaves from Abyssinian territory, to the hurt of tribes under British protection in both Kenya Colony and the Sudan.

These slaves find a ready market in Arabia, but to reach the shores of the Red Sea for conveyance to the Arabian slave markets they must pass through French and Italian territory. To put it no worse, there has been laxity on the part of the Italian and French local officials in permitting this traffic, but that need not prevent the interested Powers from making use of the pretext for the extinction of the independence of Ethiopia. The stage therefore is set for the partition of an independent kingdom, with the usual preliminaries of economic penetration, railway construction, spheres of influence, &c. Eastern Christians are the special concern of Britain when oppressed by the Turks, but apparently African Christians are in a different category and would appeal to the English Bishops in vain.

There is one defect in this beautiful picture. France also has interests in Abyssinia; and to-day French nationals control the only railway, the Central Abyssinian Railway, giving access to the sea through French Somaliland. Apparently Sir Austen Chamberlain and

the Duce have forgotten France. But the semi-official *Temps* has been making it clear recently that France intends to uphold the sanctity of Treaties and actually proposes to take seriously the pledges of twenty years ago concerning the integrity of Abyssinia. This will be an awkward fence to get over, and France is in an even stronger position as Abyssinia was her special protégé for entrance to the League of Nations. If, however, France can be compensated in other directions, her opposition may be overcome.

Three plans for the future are understood to hold the field. One is to declare that the Ethiopian State requires tutelage and to appoint Italy as the Mandatory Power. If the situation is handled skilfully this may salve the consciences of the other members of the League, otherwise prepared to protest. The second is to place Abyssinia under the control of a League of Nations Commission, the members of which would, of course, be Italians, Frenchmen, and Englishmen. This plan might work provided the three Powers concerned could agree about the proposed spheres of influence. The third, and more brutally honest plan, is the old doctrine of might being right put into practice by the carving up of the hitherto independent kingdom of Abyssinia by the three Powers concerned. If any one of the above three plans is carried out in face of the inevitable opposition of the Abyssinian people themselves it will be as great a scandal as the partitions of Poland.

There is a fourth plan which the British public should insist upon as the only decent alternative. It is that Abyssinia should be left alone to work out her own salvation. The slave trade can be prevented by suitable measures, especially if it is made unprofitable by the countries that bar Abyssinia from the sea preventing that traffic through their territory.

All this talk of spheres of influence and economic penetration had better be abandoned. The miserable bargaining and huckstering for other people's property was the feature of the Imperialism of last century. We all know where it finally led us. If it is revived to-day in Abyssinia, the British Government will stand convicted of tearing up a solemn Treaty as surely as Germany was when she invaded Belgium in 1914; and, in very decency, Sir Austen Chamberlain, on behalf of the British people, should offer an apology to Herr Stresemann for our ever having upbraided Germany for referring to a Treaty as a "scrap of paper."

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE South African-Indian controversy has been rendered less acute in consequence of a willingness on both sides to discuss it in a friendly spirit; India is ready to accept as basis of discussion South Africa's determination to maintain the white standard of living, and the South African Government suspends further proceedings on the Class Areas Bill till the views of India have been heard. Credit for statesmanlike moderation must be given to General Hertzog and Dr. Malan, the Minister immediately concerned: they are both rather new to office, and show a refreshing accessibility to reason, even sometimes changing their policy as a result of argument. Party politics have not yet fully perverted them!

If they have the courage to adopt a conciliatory line towards India there is no practical doubt that they will be able to carry it through, despite some opposition and grumbling from their own supporters: and they will have done a service to the British Commonwealth. More-

over it is probable that the psychological reaction of this will be to make them like the Commonwealth better. There is secessionist sentiment in South Africa, undoubtedly; still one may regard the parties led by Hertzog and Smuts as rival political parties within the same constitutional scheme, just as in other countries. The present Government is likely to be too busy with other troubles to raise the issue of secession.

The Indian question itself is certainly not intractable if it be approached with reason. The peculiar racial constitution of South Africa makes public opinion nervous as to the maintenance of the position of the white population; but the presence of Indians is really not a serious difficulty. India has recognized that each of the Dominions must control immigration into its own territory, so there is no danger of a flood of orientals: that principle indeed may now be looked upon as the basis of international treatment of migration, not only from India, but from other overpopulated countries. The South African problem is mostly that of the Indians already domiciled there; mostly, indeed, born there. It is true that they are prolific, but as there are at present ten Europeans for one Indian, it is clear that the high Indian birth-rate might continue for many generations before their numbers constituted a challenge to European supremacy. The ground for nervousness does not lie in mere numbers.

The fundamental problem of the country is that of the European population and the natives, who outnumber the whites by millions. Some play has been made with a vague argument that the presence of Indians complicates the main problem; it does not really do so more than the presence of the half-castes (Bantu-Europeans, commonly known as "coloured" or "Cape coloured") who are twice as numerous as the Indians. Now Mr. Hertzog has made it a part of his native policy to associate the coloured people with the whites, treat them similarly, and trust to a partial assimilation in course of time. If this can be done with 300,000 "Cape coloured" folk, it can be done with 150,000 Natal Indians. That would be the right policy: it would not mean intermarriage, but equality of social and political rights. If the Government were to adopt that policy the Indian controversy would vanish, and South Africa's own problems would be simplified.

Why, then, is such a simple and satisfactory plan not adopted at once? The special agitation that has been carried on against Indians is largely engineered by selfish interests. The Cape coloured people are practically all farm labourers and artisans; the Indians mostly belong to the same classes, but they also include a good many traders. These do not, as a rule, come from India, but from East Africa; they followed the coolies to Natal and established shops to provide for them. In any case, Indian settlers show a good deal of commercial ability, and so make money: this creates jealousy among other trading classes, and affords an easy soil for growing a crop of discontent. To see an Indian merchant driving in a luxurious car with a European chauffeur sticks in the gizzard of the European of humble position, and it is easy to persuade him that Western standards of life are menaced.

Again, when Indians buy property in a street hitherto occupied by Europeans, the neighbouring property is depreciated. It is, unfortunately, true that the Indians who have settled in South Africa are of a very poor quality, and their ways of life cause dislike.

To anyone not obsessed by South African prejudices the most striking feature of such arguments as a ground for discriminating legislation is their triviality. It is easy to get up an agitation among the more ignorant

white people of a country in which there is a constant background of uneasiness about the maintenance of white supremacy; and some whose education should preserve them from hasty judgment have been carried away by it. There would not be much strength in the agitation unless some parties had a personal interest in pushing it. The country retail trade in South Africa is chiefly in the hands of Russian and Polish Jews, Greeks, and Syrians, who hardly contribute more than the Indians to maintaining a "white" standard; the Dutch and English do not do well at it, and sometimes the poorer country folk have even been grateful to Indians for supplying them at lower prices than the European trader, with his more expensive methods, can do.

Mr. Hertzog recently gave evidence of a welcome breadth of view in another matter. Whereas the Smuts Government had opposed the raising of capital in London for the Lobito Bay Railway, the present Prime Minister has withdrawn any such opposition, saying, rightly, that it might be regarded as "an unfriendly act" to a neighbouring State. Whether he referred to the Portuguese, or Belgian colonies, or to Rhodesia is immaterial: to oppose a railway in another country because it might divert traffic from the South African railways is a mean and dubious policy that Mr. Hertzog has done well to disclaim. He would strengthen his reputation still further if he would abandon all discrimination against the Indians who are now resident in South Africa, on the ground that such laws are "an unfriendly act" towards India.

R. A. L.

AT ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCHILL AT BAY

(BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

APRIL 28TH, 1926.

THE two Churchills were never more revealed in one personality than in the doings of the past week. On Thursday night we had the old truculent, defiant, buccaneer of politics, reminiscent of the best days before the war. The Conservatives had become "fed up" with the Economy Bill. They had been muzzled into silence, loafing in the lobbies or dismally slumbering in the House; many of them called up to a succession of all-night sittings, insulted and denounced as robbers by the leaders of both Oppositions, and inundated with letters of protest from members of Friendly Societies, to which they were unable to reply. They began to think that they had had enough of this Parliamentary management. But when all the arguments were over, Mr. Churchill, the originator of the Bill, who had scarcely entered the House before, gave them what they wanted. He did not trouble to use reason or reply. But he slashed out in ever-increasing violence of rhetoric at both the Oppositions; hurled fierce accusations against Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Thomas on the one hand, and Mr. Lloyd George, and especially Sir John Simon, on the other; denounced the uneconomical demands of the friends of so-called economy; illustrated his cataract of speech with contempt and wounding epithets until he had roused the men behind him into an almost delirious pitch of excitement. This was the Churchill who, in the old days, used to be able to dominate the House in denouncing Protection and the opponents of Home Rule and all the sincere beliefs held by those who now cheered him so wildly, and whom he at the present moment so heartily despises. It was one of the most sparkling performances of the present session.

On Monday, how sorrowful the change! and how sorrowful the change, also, in the dolorous revelations of this year's Budget from the fortissimo exaltations of only a year ago! Then he had scattered liberally the contents of an Aladdin's cave; gifts to the income tax

payers, gifts to the super tax payers, gifts to the widows and orphans, gifts to the aged workers over sixty-five. Now he is compelled to strike from the first a note of darkness and gloom; and to announce "a smaller and simpler and a more sombre sphere." It is not my business in this letter to explain or criticize, condemn, or approve the items of the Budget which he gradually unfolded amid deepening disillusionment. My function is to describe how these things are received at St. Stephen's. Mr. Churchill slipped in almost unnoticed with the famous red box, evading the cheers which usually greet the Chancellor in the House; on this one day in the year normally crowded from floor to ceiling. He rose amid the faintest encouragement from his own party. His speech was for the most part heard in oppressive and almost hostile silence. He sat down in the end without any of those rapturous enthusiasms which greeted his last year's performance. For exposition, for clearness of presentment, for occasional courageous attempts to provoke humour in such an atmosphere, and for the general level of exposition and clarity of statement it could hardly have been beaten. But it was the speech of failure and of almost unexpected failure. For once the great economic journals and the prophets outside had been wrong in their calculations. Lunching beforehand with one financial expert, I was informed by him that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have at least twenty millions to play with in the coming year. The twenty millions of surplus sadly evaporated into a nearly eight millions deficit, though by all kinds of scraping together, partly by the imposition of new taxes, of which only a portion will be obtained in this financial year, and partly by the plundering of capital sums which cannot be renewed, and partly, it is clear, by a frantic appeal to the French Finance Minister to help him out for at least this year, whatever may happen afterwards, Mr. Churchill could declare the possibility of a three or four million surplus by March 31st next.

The statement of last year had been, of course, somewhat discounted, and here Mr. Churchill has justification, for, except for the coal subsidy, which was, one assumes, a Cabinet and not an individual decision, the balance-sheet would have exhibited a surplus instead of a deficit. But it was when he came to the Estimates and taxes of the present year that gloom gradually spread itself among the party to which he at present belongs. Driven either by the advice of his experts at the Treasury or by some impulse not revealed in his speech, he has written down on a large scale his calculation of the incoming revenue, and this not only in Customs and Excise, but in the income tax itself—which Chancellors normally assume to increase steadily with the growth of wealth and population. With the disappearance, therefore, of a considerable number of moribund taxes, and a great decrease in the miscellaneous receipts which still represent the remains of the vast over-expenditure on war materials, he cannot by any manner of means either relieve the country from taxation (except £500 Excise on chicory) or refrain from imposing extra imposts. And this confession to one of his ebullient temperament and sanguine nature was obviously a heavy blow, as revealed in detail to a House which expected at least that there would be no need for increased extracts of money from the subject, though that extract of money might, of course, be varied in order that while some were more burdened others might be lightened.

In the course of his speech Mr. Churchill entered into an elaborate and defiant justification of the return to the gold standard, which was both the most rhetorical and perhaps the least convincing part of his oration. A few days before, Mr. Lloyd George, recounting the astonishing revival of export trade in France amounting to 100 per cent. in some industries, had been countered by the reply from the Conservatives that this was due to the fall of the franc. But if that argument be sound Mr. Churchill should have confessed that the collapse of the coal export trade and the check in the revival of textiles, engineering, and other industries in compe-

tition with the franc-fallen nation, must have been affected by our return to gold parity. But in his opinion all was for the best, so far as this was concerned, in the best possible world, and members who had no comprehension of currency problems stimulated themselves to a measure of applause.

The only great cheer, however, which he received was on the silk duty. When he defiantly announced that he had collected his protective taxes, and that the Customs Duties on artificial silk had been "paid by the foreigner," a great roar of applause rose from all those sitting behind him; this was so truculent in character that Mr. Churchill had hastily to add that by these taxes we have probably intercepted, to a very large extent, a reduction (in price) which otherwise would have reached the consumer in this country. The two remarks are incompatible. But Mr. Churchill is not yet prepared to endorse the doctrine held by the simple folk around him that the foreigner pays the protective duties. Applause also arose for other tiny and irritating protective taxes, and for anything in connection with Protection or Imperial Preference. One was reminded of the famous story in which the working men approached the palace of the king with the legend on their banners, "Less food, more taxes." The statement that preferences would be increased, and that they would endure for ten years was worth no more than the paper on which the words could be written. Whether they endure for ten years depends entirely on whether the Protectionist majority can occupy Parliament for that time. With the lack of more substantial fare, however, the Tories welcomed the renewal of Part I. of the Safeguarding of Industries Act bringing to the revenue the enormous sum of sixty thousand pounds; the extension of the McKenna Duties to taxes on imported motor-lorries; taxes on imported wrapping-paper; and a number of other small imposts which violate all the canons of taxation in multiplication of duties which bring in little revenue, and which Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone swept away eighty and sixty years ago.

It is evident that we shall have dull debates on a dull Budget. Interest will be concentrated on the betting tax, and especially the preference given to the street "bookie" over his more respectable registered neighbour. And there will be a protest against the raid on the Road Fund, more especially when fortified by the extraordinary argument that when we make road transport easier and cheaper we shall injure the railways—the argument which was used against the introduction of all machinery by the working people of one hundred years ago. But for the moment coal and the fear of coal overshadow even national finance, and until that shadow is removed Parliament is hardly likely to attend with great concern to a Budget which represents marking time rather than any conspicuous economic reform.

The serious debate on this Budget commenced on Tuesday, in which speeches of an unusually high quality were addressed to a listless audience. Mr. Snowden made a brilliant attack, which his followers cheered, and which the Chancellor of the Exchequer contemplated with a kind of stagnant disgust. He made one mistake, however, in denouncing the betting tax because it was an optional tax, which enabled Mr. Ronald McNeill, in a debating speech in which the matter was far more excellent than the manner, to demonstrate how optional taxes were part of our essential system, and how Lady Astor (with a chivalrous wave of the hand towards her) always opted out of contributing to the Treasury by refusing a glass of beer.

Sir John Simon, in a searching analysis of Mr. Churchill's utterances of the day before, again and again drew an apparently mournful and harassed Chancellor of the Exchequer to his feet to repudiate, to explain, or to disavow. He drew blood when, after he had quoted the Prime Minister's declaration at the last election that he would put on no Protective taxes except through the Safeguarding of Industries, Mr. Churchill blurted out that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could put on any taxes he pleased.

LIFE AND POLITICS

WHEREVER people meet they talk of the betting tax and of little else in the Budget. It is no use complaining of this, for human nature seizes on what is new and strange, and when all is said and done a betting tax in England is a startling departure. I do not see why people should complain of a "dull" Budget. Mr. Churchill said he was not looking for trouble, but he is certainly going to get it. Before the war political Nonconformity would have sent out the fiery cross on a betting tax. Even now the Free Churches will be goaded into a spurt of the old fury. The licensing of bookmakers with its implication of permanency and the creation of vested interests is cordially disliked. The Turf joins in the outcry for its own business reasons. Lord Newton almost alone acclaims the betting tax, but then it is his pet bantling, and, as he hints, a 5 per cent. tax will not interfere with a gentleman's pleasures. Sophistry is easy on this subject, but I find a widespread feeling that this fancy tax is the last and least lovely flower of post-war cynicism.

* * *

Colonel Wedgwood, who, like Benedict, must be singular, denounced the Moneylenders Bill as grandmotherly legislation. Other opponents hold that it is not grandmotherly enough, because it will not put down money-lending in the slums. I do not myself see much force in this line of argument. The law as it stands and as it will be strengthened by this Bill puts every possible means of redress in the hands of the small borrower. Unless the lender is registered—or licensed as is proposed—he (or she) cannot sue in the courts, and if he does no court will allow the recovery of extortionate interest. The borrower has the power, which is rarely used, of bringing the bloodsucking moneylender into court. The borrower has only to refuse to pay, and nine times out of ten nothing will happen: the moneylender will not dare to sue, and would lose if he did. What is wanted is to find some way of seeing that the poor and ignorant know what the law is and what protection it provides; until that is done I refuse to admit the common plea that it is no use trying to help people who will not help themselves. The danger of licences is that of giving to these same poor and ignorant folk a false impression that the licence is a warrant of honesty and fair dealing. I agree that a moneylender's licence can be made a means of protection only if it is treated like the motorist's licence, and made subject to endorsement and surrender.

* * *

Sir Alfred Mond is not a very sensitive man. When Mr. Lloyd George compared him with Judas he said nothing. "Sufferance is the badge of all our tribe." He rarely deals in personalities; he has a powerful but not a lively mind. But he has turned at last. When he is told that he has helped to break up the Liberal Party he remembers his famous and arduous labours as peace-maker, and he strikes out at his tormentor. "Jackan-apes" means by etymology an Italian monkey. Sir Alfred Mond draws even.

* * *

Now that the Labour Party on the London County Council is taking up the Charing Cross Bridge question there is the prospect of a live discussion. I am afraid that if Mr. Morrison has his way—he helped to destroy Rennie's bridge—it will be the wrong thing. What nearly all the enlightened architects and London lovers want is to push Charing Cross Station across the river, and leave the way clear for a

noble road bridge, in place of the existing cage in red iron. Mr. Morrison and the Labour Party are willing to keep the station where it is or possibly put it underground like a glorified tube station. This surrender is in the supposed interests of the workers coming into Central London, but surely legions of workers cross the other bridges night and morning without any terrible inconvenience. Mr. Morrison is fathering Captain Swinton's grandiose scheme of a double bridge; a new railway bridge at the present level and a swaggering road bridge high overhead, sweeping over the Strand to come to earth by the Cavell statue. On the whole I prefer the disease to the remedy. So apparently does the L.C.C.

* * *

There was a quaint contrast between the art of Joseph Pennell and his personality. Nothing could be more dainty and refined than those delicate drawings, with their suggestion of speed and joyful surprise. And no one could be more comically cantankerous than "Old Joe," spluttering his rough abuse of men and things in general and in particular. He made an idol of Whistler, but from sheer habit he industriously revealed the feet of clay. Tall, gaunt, and looking rather like an astonished Yankee in a caricature, he was eternally squeaking out harmless vituperation. It was only old Joe's way, and was taken as such. When he lived in England he hated it (and drew its beauties like a lover); when he returned to his native America he was disillusioned again, and volubly said so. He had many friends, and they all refused to allow him to hug the grievance of being disliked. The soul within the rough case was that of a tender and untiring follower of beauty, and from his hard work and devotion came a precise and sensitive technique.

* * *

The outpouring of Birthday oratory at Stratford-on-Avon has produced one or two discoveries. Mr. Beck, of the United States, for instance, has discovered that Shakespeare was "always the gentleman." This is praise indeed, and should reduce the Baconians to impotent fury. Adulation has panted after Shakespeare for centuries, but now the crowning word has been spoken: "Always the gentleman." Anglo-Saxon appreciation can reach no more giddy height. "Lear"? Yes, all very well; but Mr. Beck restores things to their proper proportions. Matthew Arnold alone could do justice to this sublime utterance, which I write once more with a pen trembling with emotion: "Always the gentleman."

* * *

Wandering a few days ago for the last time round the Foundling Hospital, how merciless, I thought, is one age to the gods of ages gone. This place was for generations cherished in the pride and affection of Londoners, and now it is handed over to the housebreakers and hardly a voice pleads for it. The Foundlings, no doubt, will be happier in the country, but can we really make no other use of a perfect eighteenth-century relic than to allow money-makers to smash it? We shall wake up too late and discover that most of the things that distinguish London from Chicago have disappeared—and the tourists will discover it, too, and spend their money at home. If London University had had the courage to make worthy use of the site one's regrets would be less acute. As I went about I imagined the fiery shade of Handel playing on his organ some valedictory strain of indignation; and Hogarth cursing us for our contempt in the gallery where his great pictures hang, and in that once-famous Court Room, perhaps the most beautiful room in London, a precious summary of the eighteenth-century genius for decoration. We can smash such things

but we cannot recreate them. Going, going, gone! Well, we shall doubtless get a nice block of flats in exchange.

Mr. Arnold Bennett, with his famous chivalry, has rushed to the defence of his friend, Lord Beaverbrook, as a cultivated man. I am properly impressed by Mr. Bennett's description of his great friend's familiarity with literature. If I may hesitate a doubt it would be to hint that the reading of books and the power to discourse on them is one thing, and what I may call spiritual cultivation is another. I have not Mr. Bennett's advantage of personal communion with the mind that inspires the culture of the DAILY and SUNDAY EXPRESS. I know him by his works and words, of which latter I transcribed a characteristic specimen in my offending note. That knowledge is enough for me. Mr. Bennett once illuminated his friend's organ with a reply to the question "What I Believe." We now know still more about Mr. Bennett's capacity for faith. He believes in Lord Beaverbrook.

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE COAL PROBLEM

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. Alfred Morgan, has made up his mind that the production of coal is greater than the demand. He seems to think that the demand for coal has a fixed quantity. The facts, however, do not support the above view. As soon as the price of British coal was reduced last August the demand for it increased. The pits got to work full time, some pits that had been entirely stopped began to work again, and some blast-furnaces that had been stopped were set to work again. The experience of the last seventy-five years has shown that with the supply of cheap coal the demand continually increases. At the present time the world takes about 1,300,000,000 tons a year, and we are producing at the rate of about 250,000,000 tons a year. In 1913 we produced 287,000,000 tons. Since the strike of 1921 a considerable proportion of the blast-furnaces previously at work have remained cold. At a reduced price of coal and coke the blast-furnaces would get to work again, and in a few years' time our production would be 300,000,000 tons. Then Great Britain would be prosperous.

The enormous areas governed by the Republics of Russia and Turkey require manufactured goods, and if our Government, instead of quarrelling with those countries, would facilitate our supply to them of the necessities of civilization, all our coal-pits, ironworks, and factories would be working full time,—Yours, &c.,

ARNOLD LUPTON.

Westminster, S.W.1.
April 21st, 1926.

SIR,—The coalowners are in an impossible situation, and so is the Government. Neither of these parties, even if they were animated by the best motives in the world, can provide a sound, permanent, and economic solution.

It is a matter beyond their control, and it would make little difference if it were a Socialistic Government even, or if the mines were under the direct control of the miners.

The Government can, and will undoubtedly, provide a temporary expedient; they will obviate a stoppage—that will be all.

Things will drag on after the settlement very much as they have done before. More pits will close down, the numbers of unemployed miners will increase, and the burdens of those living in mining communities will become more grievous still.

The cause of the present trouble is not to be sought for in the coalfields, nor at the mines. It is not to be found in a new psychology on the part of the miners, nor is it due to inefficiency upon the part of the management.

The real cause is the diminishing markets for coal, some of which are due to the diminishing demand for steel.

There is very little ground for hope for the restoration of the pre-war demand for coal. It would be well if we recognized this fact; it will save us the pain of disillusionment later on.—Yours, &c.,

ALFRED MORGAN.

Park Crescent, Bargoed, Cardiff.
April 19th, 1926.

SIR,—With reference to Mr. J. M. Keynes's interesting suggestion, might it not be more helpful for the Government to give a 3s. bonus on all coal exported, rather than a 1s. bonus upon all coal raised?—Yours, &c.,

G. P. B.

Cambridge.

THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION

SIR,—Mr. Oswald Holmes (in your issue of April 24th) suggests that I have ignored "the one point upon which the crushing burden of education cost hinges—the Burnham Scale." Like hundreds of other critics who have written to the Press upon the subject of the Burnham awards, he has evidently not read them.

He makes the following statements: "Secondary School headmistresses who would have been happy with £350 to £400 a year are receiving £800 to £1,000; girls fresh from school or college who would be well paid at £150 are taking double that sum—inefficient and efficient alike."

The facts are as follows:—

(1) The Burnham award does not apply to Secondary School headmistresses. But the number of headmistresses in rate-aided schools in receipt of £800 must be very small, and the number who receive £1,000 is negligible. The usual salary is from £500 to £700.

(2) As regards "girls fresh from school or college" it is not clear whether Mr. Holmes's remarks refer to secondary or to elementary schools. In the former case, girls "fresh from school" are, of course, ineligible for employment; an assistant mistress in a secondary school needs either a University degree or some specialist qualification. She receives, if a graduate, an initial salary of £216 in the provinces and £264 in London; if not a graduate, £174 in the provinces and £192 in London.

"The crushing burden of educational cost" is a problem, however, of the elementary schools. In these, the initial and maximum salaries for women are as follows:—

		Initial.	Maximum.
Trained and certificated teachers:—			
Scale I.	...	£150	£246
Scale II.	...	150	258
Scale III.	...	162	288
Scale IV.	...	180	324
Uncertificated teachers:—			
Scales I. & II.	...	93	156
Scale III.	...	99	174
Scale IV.	...	108	198

These salaries are subject to a 5 per cent. deduction for superannuation. It would appear that they are, on the whole, rather less, if anything, than Mr. Holmes would like them to be.

As regards the "inducement to excel," there are doubtless points in connection with the Burnham awards which are open to criticism. But no one who is in touch with the facts of education supposes for a moment that there is any room for a downward revision of our aggregate expenditure upon salaries—except in so far as a declining birth-rate may result in a diminution in the number of teachers required.—Yours, &c.,

HUBERT PHILLIPS.

SIR,—Under the heading "The Crisis in Education" in last week's issue of THE NATION, is a letter by a correspondent who signs himself Oswald Holmes, of the Priory, Pontefract, and who points out that the main financial burden of education is teachers' salaries.

This is quite true, but why could not your apparently reverend correspondent verify his facts instead of making

inaccurate statements and sweeping accusations against the Burnham Committee? He refers to the latest Burnham settlement as the "award of a falsely constituted 'arbitration court.'" Is this an attack upon the representatives of local authorities and teachers who form the committee, or upon Lord Burnham himself?

Your correspondent then quotes wild figures which have no existence outside his own imagination. "Head mistresses of secondary schools getting £800-£1,000" exist only in Utopia. There is no fixed scale for Head *masters*, but the usual (and in most cases maximum) salaries are £600-£800. Rates for *women* are in all cases about four-fifths of the rates for men.

We are again told that "girls fresh from school or college get £300 a year." This is sheer piffle. A man spending four years at a university, getting a first-class degree and a teaching diploma, cannot start at more than £279—minus 5 per cent. for pension. A man with a second class degree starts at £234, a non-graduate at £186. The maximum salaries after eighteen years' service are in the last two cases £480 and £384 respectively—minus 5 per cent. for pension. I do not think your correspondent would seriously maintain that these rates are excessively high. Indeed, taking into account the increased cost of living (especially rents, and the price of houses), the younger men are decidedly worse off than before the war.

"There is no inducement to excel." This is nonsense. Apart from headmasterships, an efficient man has the chance of organizing a subject in a school, with extra remuneration. Far more important, however, is the safeguard against inefficiency. There is no security of tenure, and the inefficient can be sent packing. What more does your correspondent want? A mere increase of salary with "excellence"? The efficient man would promptly have to look for another post. Even at present, men with high qualifications or long experience find it almost impossible to obtain posts.

Finally, let me point out that the present Government have been such admirable guardians of the taxpayer's

pocket that we could hardly expect Mr. Churchill to countenance an "iniquitous award." On the contrary, the Burnham scales, which were to have been minima, have become in practice maxima. The Board of Education has seen to that.—Yours, &c.,

R. T. ATTRIDGE

(Assistant Modern Language Master).

The Manchester Grammar School.

P.S.—The Burnham Reports are published by H.M. Stationery Office, and can be consulted for a few pence.

HEALTH RESORTS FOR SPARROWS

SIR,—Your valued contributor, Mr. Leonard Woolf, misunderstands. In the course of a courteous reference to some work of mine he detects in it an unfortunate tendency which leads the writer "to talk of Charing Cross Station as an 'innocuous health resort for sparrows.'" It did not. This faltering pen was describing—foolishly, perhaps, but with perfect accuracy—Mr. Epstein's bird-sanctuary in Hyde Park.—Yours, &c.,

PHILIP GUEDALLA.

5, Hyde Park Street, W.2.

April 26th, 1926.

[Mr. Leonard Woolf writes: "I must apologize to Mr. Guedalla for the misunderstanding. I see on rereading the sentence that he referred to the Sanctuary, which was actually the subject of his essay. But the sentence itself is ambiguous, for it runs: '... several architects of that restless type which aches perpetually to perform Olympic feats of town-planning by throwing Charing Cross Station across the river find glorious pretexts in this innocuous health resort for sparrows.' I may add that he might with equally perfect accuracy have used the words for describing the station, as the twittering of innumerable sparrows on iron girders is so characteristic a feature of most London stations."]

QUEEN ELIZABETH

By AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

THE formidable list* below quoted need excite no alarm. Most, if not all, the books it contains have already been noticed in these columns, and their titles have merely been repeated in order to convince a sleepy-headed public that during the last few years the *Life*, *Times*, and *Character* of "Good Queen Bess," as we were taught to call her in the "spacious times" of Mrs. Markham and "Little Arthur's History of England," have received an extraordinary amount of literary attention. This list might easily have been extended, the flood of publications on the same stirring theme shows no signs of abatement—are we not promised from the vivacious pen of Mr. Chamberlin, the author of the two first-named books in the list, a long, leisurely *Life* of the one man our Virgin Queen seems ever really to have fancied as a lover, Lord Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester? Is it possible that ere the tired pen drops from our hands we may be told "Who killed Amy Robsart"? True it is, there is an *Echo* in Kenilworth Castle that more than sixty years ago told us, in thrilling Delphic tones, that Dudley was the murderer of his wife, but we must admit that it only did so because we concluded our incriminating question with the name of the man who had the strongest motive to commit the crime. "Who killed Amy Robsart," this is how we put the question, "Varney or Leicester?" And there—

upon we got the answer we wanted. Is not this the way in which our old-fashioned romantic historians have extracted from their doctored authorities the answer they most desiderated?

It is also high time we had a new *Life* of Lord Burleigh, composed throughout in the new spirit of honest archival research, without paying respect or regard for the Cecil family.

It would be too much to expect that we should live to see the day when we shall really discover what happened at the Reformation, or how that Tudor cublet Edward the Sixth was allowed to behave as he did, or why his sister Mary was permitted by the London mob to light the fires of Smithfield, and yet to die in her bed; or to be able to follow intelligently the tortuous courses pursued by the last of the Tudors. To *understand* all this would be asking too much, for if we ever did, we should be beginning to understand our national characteristics far better than we yet do.

But we must cheer up, for we have now a new race of historical writers, and a new method of composing history. Froude is the greatest fun in the world if you hate Neo-Catholicism and love Devonshire. Macaulay is great and glorious if you can bring yourself to share his opinions about the Revolution of 1688, the Anglican Clergy, and Dutch William. Cobbett's "History of the Reformation" is as fine a bit of writing as Carlyle's "French Revolution," but neither Cobbett nor Carlyle, neither Macaulay nor Froude can be trusted to write the only history we care to read. These fine fellows were all propagandists, and wrote these books to make good

* (1) "The Private Character of Queen Elizabeth." By Frederick Chamberlin. (Lane.) (2) "The Sayings of Queen Elizabeth." By Frederick Chamberlin. (Lane.) (3) "England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth." By A. O. Meyer. (Kegan Paul.) (4) "The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth." By J. H. Pollen. (Longmans.) (5) "Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth." (Three vols. Oxford University Press.) (6) "The Courtships of Queen Elizabeth." By Martin Hume. A new edition. (Eveleigh Nash.)

their opinions. The egotisms of these historians make their histories reek of the cask, and ruin the vintage for true wine-lovers.

Your archivalist historian is occasionally dull, and his insistence upon details without much sense of perspective tends to longwindedness, but he is, as yet, new to his job, and will in time learn to handle his mass of materials more skilfully, and possibly—for the flesh is weak—learn to lie with his Elder Brethren. But we will hope for the best and pray for his soul.

If it be asked how do historical characters fare under the indiscriminate massage of the archivist, we must sorrowfully answer—very badly. Halos are not worn in this kind of history. This is a pity, for we love heroes and halos; but nevertheless have we not by this time grown tired of perpetually being asked to find excuses for murders, burnings, sham trials, perjuries, treacheries, piracies, corruption in high places, simply on the ground of the character of the times when these crimes were committed? Morality, like confidence, is no doubt, a plant of slow growth in men's breasts, and it would indeed be absurd to deal out to Lord Bacon the same dose of moral censure which the *Times* would thrust down the throat of any living Lord Chancellor who took a bribe. Mr. Gladstone, though a stern moralist, saw this clearly enough, and writes:—

"As regards the official impeachment of Bacon, if taken alone, it may establish no more against him than that amidst the multitude of engrossing calls upon his mind, he did not extricate himself from the meshes of a practice full of danger and of mischief, but in which the dividing lines of absolute right and wrong had not then been sharply marked. Hapless is he on whose head the world discharges the vials of its angry virtue, and such is commonly the case with the last and detected usufructuary of a golden abuse which has outlived its time." (See "*Gladstone's Gleanings*," Vol. II., p. 306.)

This is magnificent pleading in arrest of judgment, though whether Mr. Gladstone would have handled Dutch William's peccadilloes quite so gently may be doubted.

But history is not a Court of Criminal Jurisdiction. There are no prisoners in the dock. A sensible reader of history does not want to pretend to put on the black cap, and sentence dead men to be led out to execution. But he does want to know the facts, without being told every minute that "killing was no murder" in the sixteenth century.

It cannot be denied that the light that now beats so fiercely on Elizabeth has pulled her down from her vestal state. In her own day she was the victim of cruel and contradictory slanders. She knew it, and stood it as became a great Queen. There were no newspapers in those days. Elizabeth's House of Lords, though

"Girl with many a Baron bold"—

some of ancient lineage, and some, the most important, of mushroom growth, contained no Press Magnates, but there were unlicensed preachers and ballad-mongers, who made the narrow streets of London lively with lies; some to the effect that the Virgin Queen had a number of bastards, and others that she was incapable of having a child, in or out of wedlock.

Loose scandal of this character seldom finds its way into the traditions of a great nation, and though during her later years Elizabeth was not so popular as she once had been, she left behind her proud memories, and remains one of the greatest of our national figures. The first Spanish Armada (for after our light-hearted fashion we have forgotten there was a second Armada, not quite so glorious) has outlived in popular story the Gunpowder Plot, despite the too obvious rhyme that assured us the

latter would never be "forgot"; whilst the lucky blunder of the Papal Excommunication established her throne, if not on the broad basis of the people's will, at all events on the basis of national pride and loyalty to an English Queen.

There are two books on our list we feel we can recommend even to those who are not prepared to spend the residue of their days upon earth in trying to find out what happened at the Reformation; and the first is "*The Sayings of Queen Elizabeth*," by Mr. Chamberlin (John Lane, 1923). Mr. Chamberlin, as the reader will soon discover, takes Mr. Froude and our popular historians far too seriously, even saying that "for nearly a century, millions and millions of English boys and girls have been brought up on historic fables about Leicester in Holland." We can assure Mr. Chamberlin that English boys and girls are not brought up on any such diet. They know a great deal about motor-cars, but precious little about the Low Countries.

However, when once Mr. Chamberlin gets away from Mr. Froude (whose history shows a steady declension in price in the catalogues of the second-hand booksellers), and settles down to his labour of love, in collecting and arranging under different heads the sayings of the great Queen, he is on firm ground and has produced a most valuable, as well as an entertaining, book. Some squint-eyed moralists may murmur that he is disposed to attach too much importance to "Sayings"—and no doubt there are such things as "Doings."

But it is also true that the sayings of remarkable characters, as, for example, Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington, when collected, exhibit and illustrate the "inwardness" of their real natures more conspicuously than their deeds. Characteristic sayings are scarce things. Mr. Secretary Walsingham never said anything either witty or wise, and as for Lord Burleigh, he was too wise to say anything.

The other book is Mr. Martin Hume's well-known "*Courtships of Queen Elizabeth*," of which a new edition has just appeared (Eveleigh Nash, 1926). Mr. Hume is an archivist, and sometimes leaves on you the impression that he has not told you all he has discovered, but he tells you enough to make his record of our Virgin Queen's so-called Courtships as exciting as it is bewildering. Readers of these two books will, when they come to lay them down, know more about Queen Elizabeth than they do of any other Elizabeth living or dead.

ART

THE MAYOR AND CLARIDGE GALLERIES

THOSE who are bold and optimistic enough to believe in the future of an English school of painting will gain fresh confidence from Mr. Matthew Smith's pictures at the Mayor Gallery. Here is an English artist who has a markedly personal sensibility to visual impressions. That is already much, but what is perhaps rarer and more important he has known how to set to work to bring it to expression. He has had the courage and the methodical application to explore its possibilities and cultivate its qualities without forcing it or wilfully bending it to a preconceived end.

His sensibility to colour is what strikes one as his most obvious quality, but it is of a peculiar kind. I should judge it to be excessively acute, and it has led him to an almost morbid predilection for the shock of positive and intense primaries. One feels that he almost seeks to exasperate and torture his own sensitive nerves by the violence and intensity of pure crimsons and vermilions with oppositions of dark ultramarines and green. In his earlier works, a few of which are shown here, this

leads to an oppressive and gloomy intensity. It forces him to such wilful interpretations of appearance, as, for instance, to paint a landscape with an absolutely opaque black sky against which the pure reds and blues and greens of grass and houses shine with a murky glow. It is evident even from the first that his intention is neither to achieve dramatic expressiveness, although a certain almost melodramatic mood seems at times to result as an accidental by-product, nor to create decorative harmonies. He is clearly after some more intimate and significant interpretation of vision. What that is, becomes increasingly apparent as one studies the subsequent works. In the early works these pure colours seemed to be almost as much upon the canvas and nowhere else as, say, the colours of a cross-stitch embroidery, and that without their decorative justification. Little by little the colour begins to take its position in a clearly understood space.

And one sees that it is upon colour that he lays the task of situating his planes in the spatial and plastic construction. Upon colour, too, he relies to achieve the suggestions of chiaroscuro. In all this he is pushing to its furthest limits the essentially modern view of the functional as opposed to the ornamental rôle played by colour in pictorial design. One recognizes from these more recent works of Mr. Smith's how well justified he was at the beginning to follow, even to the point of extravagance, the dictates of his colour sensibility. It was only so that he could, one feels, get command of a sufficiently extensive scale of colour to enable it to support the stress put upon it.

What surprises one in those pictures where his method has become completely successful, where the colour functions entirely, is the intensity which it gives to the plastic relief. This seems, in fact, to be more completely and clearly suggested to the imagination than it could be by vehement oppositions of light and shade. The need of large divisions in which to develop the transitions of any given coloured area impels him to design in a few simple and broadly related volumes. His "Femme du cirque," No. 4, is a triumphant vindication of this method. The modelling of the figure is developed to the utmost limit of amplitude, and the sequences of relief are rhythmically effective. Here, too, the masses of drapery, in spite of the intense local colour suggested, hold their position in the design without in any way lowering the effect of the comparatively dull and low-toned colour of the figure itself. It is a picture planned in the great tradition of pictorial design, and carried through without any failure of the impulse.

A curious example of Mr. Smith's power of using colour to give not only plastic relief but the suggestion of a whole atmosphere and illumination is No. 6, where the peculiar density and weight of the surfaces is sufficient to arouse the idea of the whole situation in space and in light and shade with hardly any particularization of these. There is only one portrait head, No. 19, but this is very impressive in the breadth and intensity of the modelling got by sequences of almost violent, though low-toned, colour. Again, there is no precise effect of light and shade, and yet the impression is of an almost Rembrandtesque salience of relief. Among the most entirely enjoyable as well as successful of these pictures are the quite recent flower pieces, where the vividness of colour is completely in control and the extreme freedom of handling creates exactly the appropriate mood by its suggestion of fluttering gaiety and life, and this is attained without any lapse into impressionist vagueness of statement, for here as elsewhere the volumes are palpable and complete.

With so much of what is most fundamental and significant in pictorial design achieved, one may well overlook a certain mannerism in Mr. Smith's work which in itself is a weakness. I mean his tendency to define his volumes with too uniformly rounded, too insensitive a contour. This has often been noticeable in his nudes.

But there are signs in the later work, particularly in the "Femme du cirque," that here, too, his growing mastery of his special method will allow him to develop a more sensitive and curious conception of linear rhythm.

One guesses that if he were to copy Ingres' Portrait of Mme. Rivière (No. 23), again to-day he would be able to compass more of Ingres' extraordinary power of evoking the whole content of his volumes by the quality of the contour. Not that there is any need for Mr. Matthew Smith to become a linealist. His design always proceeds from the interior of the volumes, from his grasp of their general relief, and for him contour will always be a deduction from that. What one hopes is that without losing anything of his ease and simplicity of statement he may give to his plastic rhythms a greater richness and variety.

The case of Miss Nina Hammett, whose works are to be seen at the Claridge Gallery, is an unusual one. She has a very genuine native talent. She seizes at once on the general characteristics of a head or of a gesture, and has a quick, easy notation in firm and fluent lines. This alert and slightly disillusioned, but never ill-natured, awareness of the general character and situation of human beings around her never fails her. On the one hand, she has never exploited it for a sentimental or popular appeal, but on the other hand, she has lacked the ambition which her talent required and merited. The result is that she has never really explored its possibilities, has never pressed it to further conclusions. Her method has not developed because she has never felt the need to set it new problems. From the very beginning she had the wit to pick out from among contemporary idioms of painting those which suited her native gift of observation, and no further curiosity either about appearance or character has impelled her to make her statements either more penetrating or richer. What she feels most she can express in her pen and wash drawings of scenes in cafés, or in the general statement of a head upon canvas. The further elaboration in her large oil paintings, which to do her justice she never pushes very far—they are never laboured or tiresome—really adds nothing personal to this first impression.

ROGER FRY.

THE DRAMA

FOREIGNERS AND SHAKESPEARE

Globe Theatre: Ruggiero Ruggeri in "Hamlet"

SHAKESPEARE is now universally proclaimed by intelligent foreigners as the greatest author who has ever lived. He has waited a long time to receive this lip-service, which is even to-day not willingly offered. Shakespeare's career has been a short one abroad. His first friend was, presumably, Voltaire, who, in turns, praised, abused, and cribbed from him, and then a tremendous boom set in with the romantic revival. But few Frenchmen can read English, and the translations remain abominable. In Germany (and I believe in Russia) the translations are sufficiently good to give some idea of the original: with the result that Shakespeare is a living force in those two countries. Once in a Paris café, I heard an Arab declaim long speeches from Hamlet in Arabic, and with a conviction that made me think the translation must be a good one. But for all the enthusiasm the Latin countries are still very vague about Shakespeare, and his practical reputation depends on his ability to provide star parts for star actors. I am not old enough to have seen Salvini, or Monnet Sully, or Mme. Sarah Bernhardt tear the passion to tatters (it is nearly always Hamlet who stands the racket); nor did my parents (more interested perhaps in my morals than my education) take me in adolescence to see Signor Grassi, who fluttered the doves of Belgravia by portraying Othello as a Sicilian savage with a taste for

crimes passionels. Still now that I have seen Signor Ruggeri, I mind less, as I feel I know all about his predecessors.

What a fine star actor in what a fine star part! The production is reduced to nothingness. No one else exists at all. The King is just a tenth-rate murderer of melodrama: Polonius a musical comedy buffoon: Ophelia and the Queen, that essential character, so flat that I have already forgotten them: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, such squint-eyed customers that it is difficult to understand the basis on which Hamlet chose his friends. A mere misfortune you might think; not a bit of it. By these methods Hamlet becomes a star turn. As the pale yellow light shines through on his ragged locks and woeful countenance, we can think of nothing but him, or rather of the actor who plays him. He is not the "courtier, scholar, knight"; he is not strong or even young. But oh! such a romantic fellow. And Ruggeri is an intelligent actor, who has really thought out his part. Further, he is endowed by nature with a handsome face and a melodious voice. He was really good at some moments, in the nunnery scene particularly, and in the conversation about the pipes. But to anyone who cares about Shakespeare, it is horrible. Who will forget the moment, when alone on the stage, Signor Ruggeri throws white flowers into the grave of Ophelia? How horribly Latin it all is, how vulgar with the vulgarity of the Mediterranean! Yet is this just? Perhaps a few years ago it was like this in England. The reading of Mr. Shaw's dramatic criticism would lead one to think that Sir Henry Irving's Hamlet was not greatly different. Perhaps it is only recently that this sort of "stunting" has left the more reputable London theatres.

After all, men of letters can be of some use to the stage: they can read a whole play of Shakespeare through and understand that important quality in a work of art, the quality Mme. de Sévigné called *les rapports*. There is no *rappor*t with Signor Ruggeri: so his talent is all wasted. In any modern English-production, some attention would have to be paid to the *rappor*ts. Hence, it eventually becomes impossible to criticize Ruggeri at all. For it is not Hamlet, not Shakespeare's Hamlet who only exists in relation to other people. Signor Ruggeri merely gesticulates in the void. Let us admire, if you will, his voice, his flexibility, his intelligence, his general competence. But, as many of us suspected after Pirandello, he is a music-hall star, not a sensitive artist. He represents everything that the more understanding European producers are at last beginning to give up.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"LOOSE ENDS" at the Duke of York's is a devastating play, a cocktail in which all the most indigestible ingredients are recklessly mingled. A "brilliant" actress lives surrounded by a number of "loose ends," who mix their drinks, smoke cigarettes, talk slang, and generally enrage the Bishops. The actress in her heart of hearts knows they are rotters, but, being presumably too busy to find any new friends, keeps up with them. Into her life comes a quiet, prudish "backwoodsman," who marries her and proceeds to clean out the house. No more slang, no more cocktails. Unfortunately at the end of Act II., he turns out to be a released murderer. In Act III. everybody is in a state of agony, but, as we might have guessed, the murder was really such a good action that the actress begins loving her husband for the first time. Now about this. The main contrast, the "fast" prudes and the prudish murderer, might well make a good comic situation. Treated as melodrama, it is absurd. Secondly, as it is the only point of the play, we should have got there as early as possible in Act I. instead of at the end of

Act II., and, perhaps most important of all, the murderer should have been a real murderer, not a knight of the round table, born a bit too late. The acting called for no comment, and the play was received with great enthusiasm.

* * *

The Three Hundred Club once more justified its existence last Sunday by producing Flecker's "Don Juan" at the Court Theatre, for the play would certainly not be done anywhere else, and it deserves to be staged for a single performance. It does not, however, gain much by being acted; yet, in spite of one or two rather foolish moments, it is never unpleasant. One can see that the mind working is an interested one, if terribly immature, and though the idea is not perspicuous, there is an idea: the verse also, though never arresting, flows pleasantly, while the satire is apt enough. One sees that it is a play in the making, and the form it has taken inclines one favourably. The production, in a very ingenious setting by Mr. James Whale, was tactfully and vigorously carried out, as one would expect, by Mr. Frank Birch. Its slightly *vieux jeu* staginess was exactly suited to the slightly *vieux jeu* drama, and Mr. Birch applied himself successfully to the, in this case, very difficult job of making the play tell exactly where and how one imagines Flecker would have wished it to tell. It is a pity all producers do not regard their function in this light. Mr. Robert Holmes was a very adequate Don Juan, and spoke his words well except for an occasional interpolated "r"; but the palm goes to Miss Jean Forbes Robertson, who again used her immense imagination and skill in the part of "ugly girl," a part for which nature has by no means formed her.

* * *

The proprietors of the Lefèvre Galleries are inaugurating their altered and renovated premises in King Street with an important exhibition of the works of Georges Seurat. Until recently very few pictures by this artist had been seen in London: then the "Baignade" appeared and was bought by the Courtauld Fund for the Tate Gallery, and quite lately we have also seen the "Poudreuse" at the French Gallery. Seurat (who died in 1891 at the age of thirty-two) painted five large works, of which "Les Poseuses" in this exhibition is one of the finest. It is a more important picture than the "Baignade," and shows the completed technique of "Pointillisme" or "Division" which he invented and towards which he was feeling the way in the "Baignade." "Les Poseuses" in size is 8 ft. 2 by 6 ft. 7; there are three nude female figures (painted from the same model) in a corner of a studio, one wall of which is taken up by another of Seurat's large pictures, "La Grande Jatte," which is thus seen obliquely in perspective. Its composition is an example of his favourite method (seen also very clearly in the four landscapes, Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5 in this exhibition) of one or two strong vertical lines intersected by horizontal lines. Its colour is of a remarkable luminosity. There are also some small early paintings here, and some drawings which show Seurat's extraordinary power of conveying volume.

* * *

The first public exhibition under the auspices of the London Artists' Association is to occupy both rooms of the Leicester Galleries for three weeks from the middle of May. This is a co-operative organization, supported by a guarantee fund, which is trying to relieve a selected group of artists of business worries by guaranteeing them a modest regular income and arranging to market their output in a regular way. I wish the experiment every success. But the main point for the public is that we shall be able to see a representative collection of the newest work of the most interesting group of painters in England. The members showing are Bernard Adeney, Keith Baynes, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, Frederick

Porter, and Roger Fry, with one or two pieces by Frank Dobson, who is to have an exhibition of his own in the autumn. I am told that cubist experiments are over for the present, and that every one of these painters has something to delight the eye and soothe the senses.

* * *

Things to see or hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, May 1.—Orchestral Concert for Children, at 11, at Central Hall.

Nicolas Orloff, piano recital, at 3, at Wigmore Hall.

Sunday, May 2.—"Distinguished Villa," Repertory Players, at Aldwych.

"Such Stuff as Dreams are Made Of," Renaissance, at the Court.

"A Bird in the Hand," Playmates, at St. George's Hall.

Monday, May 3.—Music Society String Quartet and Léon Goossens, B.B.C. Concert, at 8.30, at Chenil Galleries.

Tuesday, May 4.—"Intimate Enemies," at the Savoy.

Dr. G. E. Moore on "Universals and Particulars," at 5.30, at University College.

Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith and Captain Eckersley on "Is there too much Broadcasting?" at 5.30, at London School of Economics.

Wednesday, May 5.—Professor Geyl on Grotius, at 5.30, at University College.

Thursday, May 6.—"As You Like It," matinée, at Holborn Empire.

Friday, May 7.—Herbert Barker on "The New Delhi," at 4.30, at Royal Society of Arts.

E. Beddington Behrens on "International Problems of Labour," at 5, at London School of Economics.

OMICRON.

LINES ON GROWING OLD

SIMEON to Mary: "Yea,
A sword shall pierce thine heart."
So saint to saint; we have another way
With swords to pierce the heart.
Rabbi Ben Ezra dogmas in the hand,
Hack we the blade-edge privily first, then stand
Shod with evasion for the strife to start.

So I perceive myself meet age—
Tossing a night or two with the surprise
Of puckered weariness around the eyes
That does not pass; but speedily the stage
Of placing character in scars and lines
Above the surface perfectness of youth. "Signs
Of some suffering, a little thought," says she,
Into the mirror, held not quite so near.
Then for a palate altered there will be
Almost no need of recompense.
For who endowed with self-preserving sense
Would shed one tear
For having lost fastidiousness, and substituted
For lust of life importunate that looted
Realm after realm and found their wealth to fail,
A Hedonism built on humbler scale?
Love is, 'tis true (I hear old age debate),
A most absorbing form of sport,
But, if my memory does not distort,
Its painfulness would rule it out of court
In any well-conducted State.
At that, one hope alone there might be left,
That I should feel the blade-point through a cleft
In all this plate and mail of cowardice;
The sick glance on me of a dancing miss,
Pitying not—loathing the self-to-be.
Unless I should know better than to see.

LYN LLOYD IRVINE.

THEATRES.

ALDWYCH. (Gerr. 3929.) EVENINGS, at 8.15.
MATINEES, WED. & FRI., at 2.30.
A CUCKOO IN THE NEST.
TOM WALLS, YVONNE ARNAUD & RALPH LYNN.

COURT. Sloane Square. Sloane 5137 (2 lines.)
NIGHTLY, at 8.15. MATS., WED., THURS. & SAT., at 2.15.
THE FARMER'S WIFE
3RD YEAR AND LONDON'S LONGEST RUN.

CRITERION. EVENINGS, 8.40. MATS., TUES., SAT., 2.30.
MARIE TEMPEST in
THE CAT'S-CRADLE.

DRURY LANE. EVENINGS, 8.15. MATS., WED. & SAT., 2.30.
ROSE MARIE. A Musical Play.
NELSON KEYS. EDITH DAY. DEREK OLDHAM.

FORTUNE. Ger. 3855. EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED., SAT., 2.30.
JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK.
By SEAN O'CASEY.

GAIETY. (Ger. 2780.) EVERY EVENING, at 8.15.
"RIKI-TIKI"
A New Musical Play
By LESLIE STILES and EDOUARD KUNNEKE.
MATINEES, WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY, at 2.15. SMOKING.

HIPPODROME, London. Ger. 650.
EVENINGS, at 8.15. MATS., WED., THURS. & SAT., at 2.30.
MERCENARY MARY.
ALL SEATS BOOKABLE. BOX OFFICE 10 to 10.

KINGSWAY. (Ger. 4032.) EVENINGS, at 8.15.
**THE MARVELLOUS HISTORY
OF ST. BERNARD**
MATINEES, WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY, 2.15.

LITTLE. (Reg. 2401.) EVENINGS, at 8.30.
AUTUMN FIRE.
A New Irish Play by T. C. MURRAY. MATS., WED., FRI., 2.30.

LONDON PAVILION. (Ger. 704.) NIGHTLY, at 8.
CHARLES B. COCHRAN'S REVUE (1926).
MATINEES, TUESDAY & SATURDAY, at 2.30.

LYRIC, Hammersmith. EVERY EVENING, at 8.30.
RIVERSIDE NIGHTS
MATINEES, WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY, at 2.30. (Riverside 3012.)

NEW. (Reg. 4466.) EVENINGS, 8.30. MATS., WED., SAT., 2.30.
HENRY AINLEY and MADGE TITHERADGE
in **PRINCE FAZIL**, by Pierre Frondaie.
"All the glamour and picturesqueness of the Orient."
"Rapturously applauded."—*Evening News*.

PLAYHOUSE. EVENINGS, at 8.30. MATS., WED. & THURS., 2.30.
ALL THE KING'S HORSES.
IRENE VANBRUGH. ALLAN AYNESWORTH.

CINEMAS.

NEW GALLERY, Regent St. (Reg. 3212.) Cont., from 2 p.m.
Exclusive presentation of "**THE BAT**," "creepy, mysterious, and
entertaining to a superlative degree," at 3.25, 6.25, 9.25.

POLYTECHNIC, Regent Street. (Mayfair 2830.)
THE COURT TREATY EXPEDITION FILM.
CAPE TO CAIRO.
DAILY, at 2.30, 6, and 8.30.

TIVOLI (Gerr. 5222.) PAUL WHITEWAY and his Band. 2.30 & 8.30.
Ralph Ince's Production **THE SEA WOLF** by Jack London.
2.30, 5.30, 8.30. Sundays, 6 & 8.30.
Jack Hylton's **KIT CAT BAND** 5.30 Perf., Sunday, 6 & 8.30 only.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

OUT OF THE WILDERNESS

WHEN Abraham Lincoln was standing for the Presidency of the United States the song which his supporters sang was:—

"Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness,
Out of the wilderness, out of the wilderness,
Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness,
Down in Illinois."

There is rarely any truth in election slogans, but in this slogan which carried "Old Abe" to victory there was not only truth, but a peculiar significance and appropriateness. That is the first and most enduring impression which one gets from a new biography of Lincoln: "Abraham Lincoln," by Carl Sandburg (Cape, two vols., two guineas). Mr. Sandburg is a distinguished American poet, and for over thirty years he has, as he says, been planning this book. It is one of the most curious, exasperating, and interesting books which I have ever read. It has as sub-title "The Prairie Years," in other words, Mr. Sandburg tells the story of only the first fifty-two years of Lincoln's life, from the day when he was born in the Kentucky log-cabin to the morning of February 11th, 1861, when the train steamed out of the station of Springfield, Illinois, to take him from the wilderness to the White House.

Mr. Sandburg tells this story in immense detail and at enormous length. I have an old-fashioned prejudice against even a weekly journalist not reading a book from end to end, but I must confess that when I was three-quarters through the first volume, I began to think that I should never have sufficient determination to finish Mr. Sandburg. His book seemed to me to be oddly like Miss Lowell's *Life of Keats*. It was a kind of ragbag into which was stuffed, with little attempt at order and none at discrimination, every kind of fact remotely connected with the biographical victim. One felt, as one read on, that one was being drowned and suffocated in Lincolniana, and in the purple poetical patches of Mr. Sandburg's own which at more or less regular intervals he stuffed into the bag. No figure or character of the man Lincoln seemed to be emerging from this colossal conglomeration of words. The worm of a reader began to turn more than once, and it was touch and go whether the second volume was opened. But it was opened and read to the end of its 428 pages, with, to the reader, a remarkable result.

The more I ploughed my way through this second volume, the more vivid and concrete a figure and character of Lincoln rose before me. Indeed, before I had finished it, I had to admit that I had rarely, if ever, read a biography which gave one such an overpowering sense of reality in the character of the biographee. I find that it is extremely difficult to know whether one is or is not fair to Mr. Sandburg. It is possible that the credit for this should be given to him. His biography may be a most cunning and consummate work of art; he may, with deliberate and immense skill, have built this granitic figure of Lincoln out of an almost infinite, and apparently random, accumulation of little facts. Upon reflection I think that some of the credit undoubtedly ought to go to Mr. Sandburg. (He has, for instance, a very deliberate device of every now and then breaking off the details of Lincoln's life, and giving a curious jazz-like account of innumerable events which were happening at the moment all over the world.) His

intention, I take it, is thus suddenly to throw out the character of Lincoln as a gaunt shadow against that other chaotic wilderness, the world. The device, like everything else in this book, seems to be actually carried out in a desperately exasperating manner, and yet to be in some way successful. That is why it is almost impossible to say how much of the credit belongs to Mr. Sandburg. Perhaps, if anyone had the courage and persistence to heap into the ragbag of two volumes sufficient facts about the life of anyone, a solid character would emerge. Or perhaps it is really Lincoln himself; it may be that old Abe, who was strong and strange enough to come out of the wilderness of Illinois into the White House, is also strong and strange enough to emerge as this granitic reality from the wilderness of Mr. Sandburg's book.

* * *

Certainly Lincoln is an immensely impressive figure at the end of these two volumes. The halo which surrounds politicians and statesmen who have become national heroes is usually pretty cheap and tawdry, and the greatness of great men is more often than not a very inferior brand of greatness. Again, the story of the penniless and uneducated boy who becomes a strong man and leaves the wilderness to become a President or a Prime Minister has a certain fascination, but it is too hackneyed to stir the blood or keep one interested for one thousand pages. The fascination of Lincoln lies in his combination of strangeness with real greatness. I keep on seeing him as a scapegoat coming out of the wilderness, with all the sins and follies and stupidities of the world upon his head, instead of, as in the Bible, carrying them off with him into the wilderness. In the famous picture of "The Scapegoat" by Holman Hunt—which seems to me probably the worst picture ever painted—the goat is one of the most supremely ridiculous figures imaginable. When I think of Lincoln as a scapegoat, he appears to me rather like Holman Hunt's scapegoat. He was grotesque, ridiculous, but he was something much more; he was sublimely and tragically ridiculous. There has never been in any man a stranger combination of the buffoon and the philosopher, the fool and the thinker. There was something primeval in him, which made his Cabinet, when he became President, call him "The Gorilla"; but superimposed upon this almost terrifying primitiveness were extraordinary sagacity, intellectuality, humanity, sensitiveness. "The man was a sort of monstrosity," said a Springfield lawyer who had known him for years, "... it is inconsistent with the laws of human organization for any such creature to possess a mind capable of anything called great." And yet, for once in a way, "the laws of human organization," whatever they may be, did prove inconsistent. Lincoln, by some miracle, had the mind and character of the ordinary man of the jungle or wilderness raised to the *n*th degree, which we may call great, and also in some peculiar way purified. It was this fact which, by another miracle, the ordinary men of the 'fifties and 'sixties in America unconsciously recognized. Thus it was that in 1861, contrary to all the rules of the political game, this uncouth, melancholy wild man of the West was elected President. He was chosen, in so far as he was chosen, by the people, as typically one of themselves to represent them. He was old Abe who had come out of the wilderness to be their scapegoat.

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

SWINBURNE

Swinburne. By HAROLD NICOLSON. (Macmillan. 5s.
Ballads of the English Border. By ALGERNON CHARLES
 SWINBURNE. With an Introduction by WILLIAM A.
 MACINNES, M.A. (Heinemann.) 8s. 6d.)

If we may judge by Mr. Nicolson's study, the new series of "English Men of Letters" will mate rather oddly with the old. Something has happened. Presumably it is the war, or perhaps only the slow growth of psychological evidence, now suddenly inescapable. The old series, even for its time, had about it an air of fantastic solemnity which the occasional intrusion of a George Saintsbury or a Walter Raleigh did little to dispel. But now the incubus is cast off: we are to talk quite frankly about our author's complexes and obsessions, his sexual abnormalities and dominant impulses. This is all to the good, and Mr. Nicolson is to be congratulated on his pioneering triumph. My only complaint is that, once launched on his adventurous sea, he keeps close in to the coast. Psychological criticism is only justified if it is thorough. Its basal assumption is that there exists between a writer's life and his literary expressions an intimate connection which can only be revealed by a scientific analysis. The poems can be explained in terms of the poet's personality, and once translated into such terms they are to be judged, not merely as expressions existing in their own right, as art for art's sake, but as the symbols of a certain type of humanity, and valued accordingly.

Swinburne is obviously a fruitful subject for such a method of criticism. There is an immense disparity between the seeming emptiness and triviality of his life and the portentous volume of his poetry. It is impossible for ordinary literary criticism, with its vague appreciations and internal values, to bridge the gap. Only psychology can do it, and that realization is Mr. Nicolson's saving grace. His thesis is that Swinburne's experiences "were far more important and direct than is usually supposed; that, owing to his arrested development, only those experiences, however, which he acquired before his twenty-first year penetrated beyond the stage of emotions and became attitudes; that the most important of these attitudes was his acutely sensitive relation towards the tension between revolt and submission; that only when he was dealing with these two dominant impulses, and not when he was dealing with those special forms of belief which constituted his later experiences, was his imagination at all formative; and that these considerations, while they explain why so much of Swinburne's work provokes no response, and illustrate incidentally his deficient power of communication, may also serve as at least a temporary standard for the valuation of the vast bulk of poetry which he composed."

Let it be stated at once that, in so far as this thesis needs illustrating, Mr. Nicolson succeeds admirably. His explanation of the genesis, content, and general character of Swinburne's poetry is clear, inclusive, and quite convincing. It is only when he imagines, as he does in the last phrase of the passage quoted, and in the book generally, that such an "explanation" or "illustration" provides us with a standard of values, that he leaves us with a sense of something wanting. Meredith thought that Swinburne lacked "a central core." Mr. Nicolson takes exception to this criticism, and claims that this central core, "which burnt with a white ardour, is to be found in his love of Liberty. For him 'Liberty' was a religion: something white and circumambient and intense." It is precisely at this point that Mr. Nicolson becomes uncritical. It is not enough to trace your quarry into the dense thickets of an emotional idea like "Liberty." Criticism must in some way transcend the label: it must define the idea and place it in some relation to the practical conduct of life. The more Mr. Nicolson describes Swinburne's concept of liberty, the less appealing it becomes. "His loathing of all restrictions, whether political, moral, intellectual, or social, amounted almost to claustrophobia: he was a white bird perpetually winged for escape; he appeared to himself as some wild sea-mew beating against the bars." What is this but the gesture of egoism? It is a purely negative concept of liberty, with no creative force whatever.

We are told that this liberty is "the symbol of youth and health and light, the symbol of the highest physical and spiritual enjoyments. . . . Liberty is the faith that stands courageous when 'grey-haired hope' has fallen blind. She is the eternal Truth . . . action and companionship, the hope of boyhood, the more serious faith of age; she is pity and she is love; she is adventure and hatred; she is the 'fair bare body of Wisdom,' and she is the eternal unreason; she is the new dawn and yet she has for ever existed; she is the cause and effect of all our human energies and excitements"—and many other dithyrambic things. But it needs little reflection to see that all these things are attributes of individuality. Liberty, for Swinburne, did not rise into that higher category of being in which it becomes, not a liberation of impulse, but a concentration of impulse in duty; a thing inconceivable for the individual, because then in conflict with the higher liberties of faith, tradition, and communal creativeness.

I do not deny, what Mr. Nicolson so freely claims, that Swinburne generated (and this seems the right word) some very magnificent poetry. But it is not necessary to be solid to be magnificent. Morris saw the fault clearly enough: "The surroundings of life are so stern and unplayful that nothing can take hold of people which is not rooted in deepest reality and is quite at first-hand." Swinburne never came to that realization (never for long: I think he was near it in his best poem, "A Leave-Taking"); he remained, as he has pictured himself in "Thalassius," "anadyomenos, a sexless, ageless, earthless emanation of sun and sea; something potential rather than potent; something impervious to human rules of growth and development." Such is Mr. Nicolson's interpretation of that self-revealing poem, and I think we may agree with him in regarding "Thalassius" as "a very illuminating and intensive disclosure of the central core of Swinburne's temperament." But, like the earth's, according to some geologists, this centre is purely gaseous.

It will be obvious that Mr. Nicolson has written a very interesting and aggressive book. I think his study, though not itself final, will precipitate a final consciousness of Swinburne's qualities. Apart from its lack of psychological thoroughness (it would have been possible, for example, to carry the analysis of all the mental regurgitations that proceed from the sense of sexual impotence to much greater and more illuminating depths) and apart from its lack of a final criticism of values, there is a minor default of method in this book to which it may be worth while to refer quite briefly. Mr. Nicolson was perhaps necessarily committed to "a guide-book character" for his monograph by the general purpose of the series in which it appears. Nevertheless, I think we could have spared a little of the classification and purely expository description of the poems for a few pages of what, in a case like Swinburne's, is apt to be the most illuminating of all kinds of criticism: I mean comparative criticism. This can at times be ridiculous, but within the limits of common sense Plutarch's method is always justified. It happens that there is in Poe an almost contemporary poet with characteristics of a startling similarity: the same sense of inferiority and the same basis of sexual incapacity—the only difference being that, whereas Swinburne was cast into an environment which enabled him to ignore reality, Poe was compelled at every turn to compound with the grim facts of existence. The result was, not an emanation of sun and sea, but a tragic personality—fantastic, but earthly; and that is why, psychological criticism leading us as it does to personalities, we find a higher value in Poe than in Swinburne.

These two meet again in a consideration of poetic technique. There is the same unreasonable pursuit of purely tonal values in poetry. That is legitimate enough so long as the tones subserve some meaning; but in Swinburne generally, and in Poe occasionally, the music becomes merely vacant. And I think it is a matter of historical fact that the present research for values in poetic technique other than the musical and the metrical largely originates as a reaction to the cloyed exuberance of Swinburne's endless alliterative anapaests.

A side of Swinburne to which Mr. Nicolson rightly does justice is his scholarship, and this scholarship was never more usefully employed than when he turned his attention to the restoration and emendation of the English ballads.

For this task he was peculiarly fitted, for it is not only a question of research and technical criticism (though these are necessary), but also one of poetic feeling and insight. These ballads are of supreme importance. They constitute one of our precious vestiges of an impersonal literature, and the greatest literature, like the greatest art, is always anonymous and impersonal. And it is a curious fact, or perhaps a perverse opinion on my part, that some of Swinburne's best poetry is to be found among the pastiches of the old ballads which form a third part of the volume which Mr. MacInnes has edited. There Swinburne had to turn the stream of his exuberance into a channel where all is crisp, decisive, and defunct—where there is the echo of great events, but no vain personality.

HERBERT READ.

THE HEART OF ASIA

My Life as an Explorer. By SVEN HEDIN. (Cassell. 25s.)

"HAPPY," says Dr. Hedin, "is the boy who discovers the bent of his life-work during childhood"; and such was his own good fortune. Already soaked in the literature of exploration, he was just fifteen when Nordenskiöld returned to his native city of Stockholm, having accomplished the North-East Passage:—

"The entire city was illuminated. Buildings near the water-front were lit by countless lamps and torches. On the royal palace a star, Vega, shone forth in bright gas-flames; and amid this sea of lights the famous ship came gliding into harbour. With my parents, sisters, and brothers, I enjoyed a view of the city from the heights on the south side. I was a prey to the greatest excitement. All my life I shall remember that day. It decided my career. From the quays, streets, windows and roofs enthusiastic cheers roared like thunder. And I thought, 'I, too, would like to return home that way.'"

Hedin decided to "go and find the North Pole." But, though he early became an explorer, fate directed his steps towards Asia instead. In 1885, shortly before he left school, the principal asked him to act as travelling companion to a younger boy who had to make a journey to Baku; and, this mission accomplished, our author embarked upon a solitary adventure into Mesopotamia. Before he was twenty-six, he had accompanied a Swedish Embassy to the Shah of Persia—"a journey the like of which," for the pomp that attended it, "is to be found only in ancient narratives"—and had also traversed Caucasasia, Russian Turkestan, and Bokhara.

Such was Hedin's apprenticeship. "Step by step," he says, "I had worked my way deeper and deeper towards the heart of the largest continent in the world. Now I was content with nothing less than to tread paths where no European had ever set foot." In 1893 he started upon a journey which lasted over three years and covered a distance greater than that from Pole to Pole. The charts, in five hundred and fifty-two sheets, measured three hundred and sixty-four feet; and of this mapped portion nearly one-third represented land hitherto completely unknown. During this journey many buried cities of the desert were discovered; Tibet was thoroughly penetrated; Lhasa was entered after much difficulty and peril; and the sources of the Brahmaputra and the Indus were first reached by a white man.

The author's adventures were many and varied. Writing in a modest, conversational style, he does not always do full justice to them, though his book has several outstanding and memorable chapters, such as that describing the repeated attempts to scale the "Father of the Ice Mountains," or that recounting a desert journey in which, through lack of water, his caravan met with disaster, and only he and his servant, finding an unexpected pool at the very moment of complete exhaustion, survived. Here the narrative is intensely dramatic, and as a vital presentation of the horror of thirst it would be difficult to match it. On the whole, however, Hedin is picturesque rather than exciting. He is "not a hunter," and does not love thrills for their own sake. He is, on the other hand, a most interesting combination of scholar, scientist, and artist; and, quiet, genial, and meditative, a lover of beauty and of the little humours and chance companionships of life, he will commend himself as much to the essay reader as to the lover of conventional travel literature.

ROMANTICISM

The Romantic Theory of Poetry: an Examination in the Light of Croce's Æsthetic. By A.E. POWELL, sometime William Noble Fellow of Liverpool University. (Arnold. 12s. 6d.)

FOR some time now there has been among a section of our younger writers a reaction against the romantic conception of literature. Mr. Eliot, Mr. Strachey, Mr. Huxley, Mr. Garnett, all these—and other names could be added—may be set down as in different ways anti-romantic. Now comes from outside, as it were, the author of this suggestive study, who, if not against, is at any rate dissatisfied with, the romantic theory. In her mind, she says, it "died hard, and I felt the need to make clear to myself the intellectual grounds of my apostasy." Her examination of it is thorough and penetrating; she disentangles with admirable skill what is false and impossible in it: and it may be said of the romantic theory that what was false in it was impossible. The remarkable thing is that after the strictest scrutiny it emerges as a theory of tremendous profundity. Croce, certainly, has made poetry more comprehensible and reasonable than the romantics succeeded in making it, and that has been his service to criticism; yet for illumination, for inspired apprehension of the operation of poetry and the state in which it is conceived, one would read almost any of the sentences which Mrs. Powell quotes from Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, or Keats rather than any of his. The romantics did not see the problem in proportion, perhaps, but they looked deep into it. Their one absurd error, for which Coleridge was chiefly responsible, was that the truth of poetry was philosophical truth. "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty," it is obvious, has little value as a proposition. The statements of poetry lack the objective value which the statements of science possess.

But the other great romantic dogma, that the moment of inspiration is more intense, more full, than that of expression, Mrs. Powell, in spite of her skill, does not succeed in shaking. Croce was especially severe on this notion. "To feel oneself one with Nature, to strip off humanity, to assimilate one's own spirituality to that of external things, to make oneself Nature . . . is not superior life . . . but low, primitive life." One has only to summon Wordsworth's "serene and blessed mood" in which

"the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul,"

to see how much more weight the experience of the poet has than the reasonable conclusion of the philosopher; for the state described here is not "low and primitive." But the truth is that on this point Croce was not disinterested. It was necessary to his grandiosely optimistic philosophy that the moment of expression should be superior to that of feeling. Yet there is no reason why it should be so, and the experience of the other romantics was the same as Shelley's, that "the mind in creation is a fading coal . . . when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline." On such points the only evidence is that of the poets themselves.

It is hazardous to give any meaning at all to the term romantic, but it is necessary, and the only thing to be done is to accept whatever meaning is given. To Mrs. Powell "the romantic artist is one who values content more than form"—inspiration, in other words, more than execution. This may be accepted, though the form of Keats's poetry was as remarkable as its content. But one is surprised that the author should quote without criticism Croce's journalistic generalization: "The romantic asks of art, above all, spontaneous and violent outpouring of emotions, love and hate, anguish and joy, despair and exaltation." This is a very melodramatic view of the romantics. To Wordsworth poetry was "emotion recollected in tranquillity"; to Shelley when composition began inspiration was on the decline; to Keats "poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle or amaze it with itself." And, indeed, it was not so much that the romantics valued content more than form, as that, with a new vision of Nature to express, they had a struggle with form of which their immediate predecessors knew nothing. How new this vision was we may guess from Shelley's belief that he lacked "the power of awakening

in others sensations like those which animate my own bosom," and from De Quincey's enthusiastic salutation of Wordsworth's poetry as "the ray of a new morning and an absolute revelation of untrodden worlds, teeming with power and beauty, as yet unsuspected among men." No wonder that the romantics thought their intuitions were universal truths and valued inspiration above everything! It was comprehensible, it was indeed inevitable. Their enthusiasm falsified their aesthetic theory, and their criticism had the defects of the qualities of their poetry; but it had also many of these qualities. In Mrs. Powell's penetrating study all this becomes clear. On Coleridge particularly she has valuable things to say, and her criticism of the five chief romantic poets will have to be taken into account by anyone who writes on them in future.

EDWIN MUIR.

COCTEAU COLLECTED

Le Rappel à l'Ordre. By JEAN COCTEAU. (Stock.)

ACCORDING to the publisher this is the first collected edition of the critical works of Jean Cocteau. By what other epithet these notes and essays could have been described I know not, but I know that the epithet "critical" is misleading. So, be it understood from the first, that the content of this volume is criticism after the manner of Jean Cocteau—a product, that is to say, of the creative intelligence, far more like a work of art than most of what goes by the name of art.

The function of the critic as understood by the more modest of the trade is to comment and elucidate for the benefit of the public; as understood by the greatly daring, to correct and direct the artist. But, servant or reformer of the age, the critic, as a rule, takes his place on the bank, whence he comments to the spectators on the rowing or bellows advice to the crew. Jean Cocteau is in the boat. What is more, he combines the duties, or some of the duties, of stroke, cox, tide, stream, and following wind—which is absurd. Only I am using a metaphor, as Cocteau himself might use it, not so much to illustrate as to carry forward the argument.

Cocteau came to consciousness of himself and his powers in the middle of a war and of a movement born a dozen years before the war. That movement, in spite of—perhaps because of—its prodigious vitality, has tended ever to become as extravagant, as incoherent, as essentially romantic as became the movement of 1830. All the grinning empty-headedness of what I call jazz, all the imbecility of Dada, all the fatuity of Expressionism, all the pretentious vulgarity of Fascism, were in it implicit. And Cocteau jumped right in. Happily, though the garment of decency he may have left on the bank, his first-rate intellect and classical breeding he could not leave. So, though for a while he swam merrily with the stream, before long he was asking the classical, the devastating question: "Whither?" That was his first critical gesture.

But the young river in a hurry scurried on—nowise majestically. They will do it. Rivers will take the line of least resistance from the hills to the sea: in the long run you cannot change their direction; you can but dyke and dam. Somehow Cocteau, swimming in the very middle of the stream, performed this miracle: at once he dyked and dammed and led the moving throng. Each work that he published was an impulse and a check (for you can at the same time press and hold a horse) and an illumination. And what he illuminated was the very outer edge, the foremost ripples, of life.

Life, I say: for the most mysterious and perhaps the most important thing about Cocteau's criticism is that he seems always to be dealing not so much with the work of art as with that fertile radium-charged matter which lies just below it. He pounces on the work at the point where all arts meet. And remark that Cocteau is the most versatile man of his age: master of prose and verse, a competent musician, a gifted draughtsman, and a producer of genius. When I call him producer I think of "Les Mariés de la tour Eiffel"—the subtlest piece of *mis en scène* I ever saw—and of L'Antigone, judged by Mr. Francis Birrell the best rendering of a Greek play he ever saw. But, in fact, Jean Cocteau, critic, is producer on a larger stage. He is the *metteur en scène* of the modern movement.

To play that part a man must possess a singular equipment; and a singular one Jean Cocteau possesses. He is of those rarest beings, the sympathizers with originality. No matter how open-minded we may be, we are all—almost all—prejudiced against the unfamiliar. Unless we have seen something rather like it before, our reaction to novelty is instinctively hostile. Now, Cocteau positively welcomes novelty, provided it be genuine. He seems to divine tomorrow's secret. Yet, while his imagination responds to what is original in his contemporaries, while his gift of exposition enables him to illustrate what is worth illustration, his intellect is an acid to detect the spurious—the mass of mere nonsense masquerading as modernity. He rarely makes the mistake of supposing that a bad young writer or painter or musician is less bad than a bad old one. And if he can salute a new phase of Picasso or Stravinsky almost before the artist himself has recognized it, he is not to be taken in by the humbug of a Gertrude Stein or the startling mediocrity of a Caligari film. While the earnest seekers after novelty were discovering Expressionism, Cocteau discovered Radiguet.

Some day, I suppose, he, too, will grow middle-aged: even Cocteau will make *il gran rifiuto* at last. There's the respect that makes calamity of so long life. Meanwhile, though mistakes he has made and will make of course, of living critics he is most to be trusted the moment we are dealing with what is contemporary. For, living on the very edge of life, he can be trusted to welcome what is genuine, be it never so strange, discordant, or upsetting; while mere rubbish he can be trusted without mercy to reject.

CLIVE BELL.

SKETCH FOR THE PORTRAIT OF A FAMOUS MAN

Woodrow Wilson. By WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE (Benn. 21s.)

IN the matter of the biography of its famous men, posterity is often like a painstaking but at first uninspired portrait painter. Many sketches are made, and then one day the portfolio is ransacked and absorbed, the brush is handled with genius, the job is done once and for all. This book of Mr. White's is, in spite of its length, no more than a sketch for a full-length portrait of Woodrow Wilson. It is built rather on the verbal reminiscences of Wilson's friends and enemies than on the letters and papers of the man himself. Wilson is rarely allowed to speak for himself, he is the subject of what Mr. White has gathered from other men and other books concerning him; and so, although the narrative is sustained with conspicuous skill and fairness, it never rises above the level of popular biography. The disadvantages of Mr. White's method are most apparent when he deals with the years of Wilson's presidency. Here the popular story almost comes to grief under such luscious chapter headings as "How the magician won the war," and "The path of glory ends." The fact is that only a skilled historian could reduce to simple outline Wilson's conduct of America's domestic and foreign policy between 1912 and 1919.

Yet Mr. White's account has one great virtue which is bound to engage the attention of Wilson's ultimate biographer, whose difficulty, it seems, will be not so much to get at the facts of Wilson's administration as to explain his actions in terms of his character. Here was a man who could write in solitude homilies on international co-operation of such simple power as would go to the hearts of whole nations; yet he never learned a better way of dealing with a friend waiting with a criticism in the next room than that of icily refusing to see him about it. Mr. White attacks this psychological puzzle with some success. He refuses to telescope chronology for the sake of concentrating on the "important" years of Wilson's life. Starting with Wilson's grandfathers, he traces two racial streams, each strongly Presbyterian, one Scotch—dour, self-righteous, repressive, implacable—and the other Irish—gay, uxorious, vain, with a talent for teaching and preaching. He maintains that Thomas Woodrow Wilson was a temperamental whirlpool at the confluence of these warring streams, and that Irish "Tommy Wilson" and Scotch "Woodrow" never came to terms. No doubt Mr. White rather overworks this dichotomy as colour to his narrative, but it is a clue to what Wilson did between Paris and Washington in 1919, and suggests why at his death he was loved only by the millions who had not had to work with him.

WILD LIFE

Birds in England. By E. M. NICHOLSON. (Chapman & Hall. 12s. 6d.)

Animal Life in Field and Garden. By JEAN HENRI FABRE. (Butterworth. 7s. 6d.)

MR. NICHOLSON'S book is one that should be read by all who are interested in the preservation of the fauna of these islands, for it is a sober, careful statement, regarding our bird population in the past, at the present time, and last, but not least, the outlook as regards the future. In some ways it is melancholy reading. He shows how species have risen, and how they have declined; how some, such as the great birds of prey, have vanished before the increase of our population, and how others, such as the house-sparrow and the wood-pigeon, have risen with it. He attributes the diminution of the former, first to gamekeeping, and secondly to the activities of the collector. The author very rightly points out that once a species has become scarce it is the special prey of the monied egg-collector, whose craze for British-taken clutches means a heavy toll upon the rarest birds. But, though unhappily the mania for collecting eggs is by no means a thing of the past, there is fortunately a growing public appreciation of nature, of wild life, which makes the outlook better than it was, say, fifty years ago. Then no house, whether large or small, was complete without some glass cases containing miserable remnants of feather and fur, sorry reminders of what once were live creatures. The large houses had the biggest cases; that was the only difference. Now such glazed coffins are much less numerous. Nevertheless, it is the reviewer's opinion that the local taxidermist in the country town has yet much to answer for with regard to the shooting of rare and uncommon birds. Keepers, rabbit-catchers, and the various people who carry a gun know him, and know likewise that he is glad of specimens, and will give them something for anything unusual. Not long since, three, or possibly four, buzzards appeared in a neighbourhood where these fine birds are rarely seen. Two local landowners made an effort to protect them, but it was little use, for, before long, two of the buzzards were on view in the taxidermist's shop. A locally killed hoopoe was to be seen at the same time, to say nothing of such birds as a kingfisher, lesser spotted woodpecker, and a couple of greater spotted woodpeckers.

Yet we must not blame the taxidermist too much, for, even when he does not know what he is going to do with it, the man with a gun can seldom resist the temptation to fire at anything unusual, and this whether he is a so-called educated man or the reverse. The impulse to fire at the unusual seems to be overwhelming, and it seems that this impulse was really at the root of the recent massacre of the bitterns which hard weather had compelled to leave Hickling Broad, where they had for so many years been carefully fostered and protected. But it does not make the massacre less pitiable!

Certainly the problem of the preservation of wild life in England is a difficult one, but it may be simplified by the better education of all classes in natural history, but that cannot give us back our exterminated birds, and it is doubtful if it can help the recovery of our present rare species. Yet, greater knowledge of wild life would undoubtedly save some creatures, both birds and beasts, which are following the same sad course of decline, when the only chance of preserving them will be in protected sanctuaries.

Among other interesting comments of the author, his remarks on the policy of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds merit careful consideration; but the whole book is candid and outspoken, and full of food for thought. It is a book to read and consider.

As regards the illustrations it will be sufficient to say that they are woodcuts by Mr. Fitch Daglish, who has also illustrated "Animal Life in Field and Garden," though in the latter he portrays chiefly mammals. This last is the latest translation from the works of Fabre. Now Fabre is always Fabre whatever his subject may be, even when he leaves his beloved insects to discourse on birds and beasts, so it seems ungracious to carp, yet it must be admitted that among these bigger creatures he is not quite the illimitable Fabre of the insect world, the Master who discourses of the strange lives of the little things around us. It is evident that when he discourses on owls and eagles, on moles, and

on woodpeckers, he does not always write of his own personal knowledge. He even relates the old story of the eagle carrying off and eating a child—one of three years old, too! But when we get to the chapters on insects the Master comes into his own, and carries us off into that weird world where live the grasshopper, the beetle, the caterpillar, and the ichneumon, and then tells us of how they live and die, with a knowledge born of loving observation.

F. P.

THE CATALAN PROBLEM

La Catalogne et le Problème Catalan. Par GEORGES DWELSHAUVERS. (Paris: Alcan. 10frs.)

SINCE the Spanish *coup d'état* of September, 1923, when Primo de Rivera came into European prominence, and the Directory into being, more people outside Spain must have come to hear of the Catalan problem than can ever have known of it before. For years, those four industrious and fertile provinces lying around Barcelona, their political centre, have been engaged in a contest with the Spanish Government for some degree of autonomy, and certain actions of the Directory, aimed undoubtedly against this movement, unhappily embittered Catalan feeling. Since then, prominent Catalan leaders have been away on holiday—"lying abroad for the good of their country," as the Directory would no doubt have put it, for they have spent some of their time in flooding those believed to be influential and sympathetic with pamphlets setting forth their grievances.

M. Dwelshauvers, during the last five years, has also been lying abroad, but this in a strictly unequivocal sense, for while he has been in charge of the Psychological Laboratory at Barcelona he has devoted his spare time to producing a most excellent little book, the laudable aim of which is not to discuss the Catalan problem but to give an all-round account of the people whose revivification has caused it—of their language, literature, arts, institutions, intellectual movements, and political and religious life. He leaves no doubt on which side are his sympathies, but it can truly be said that he writes with a great sense of justice, using "objective observation" only, in his efforts to penetrate to the *esprit catalan*.

Rather than any other, a Frenchman is the person for this task. A Castilian or a Catalan would take sides; an Englishman or a German would necessarily be too far removed in sympathy from his subject unless he had spent a lifetime in Catalonia. But on either side of the Pyrenees the people have so much in common, that a Frenchman, especially a Meridional, starts with at least some of the necessary material before ever he crosses into Spain.

M. Dwelshauvers has written avowedly to awake sympathy which he would be the last to identify with unreasonable support. Nor will many readers of his book so identify it. He has shown us a record of weakness mingled with strength, but above all he has shown us an immense fertility and activity which in the course of the next generation is morally bound to produce something that will not be forgotten. Therefore his book should be read, and read now, by those who wish to understand it when it comes.

E. ALLISON PEERS.

ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

SOME interesting biographies have just been published: "Stewart Headlam," by F. G. Bettany (Murray, 10s. 6d.), which contains reminiscences by Mr. Shaw, Mr. Wells, Mr. Sidney Webb, and others; "Marmaduke Lord Langdale and Some Events of his Time (1598-1661)," by Frederick Harold Sunderland (Jenkins, 15s.); "A Cricketer's Yarns," by Richard Daft (Chapman & Hall, 15s.); "The Vespasiano Memoirs, Lives of Illustrious Men of the Fifteenth Century," by Vespasiano da Bisticci," translated by William George and Emily Waters (Routledge, 21s.), the first translation into English of the "Vite" of the Florentine bookseller; "Naval Memories and Traditions," by Admiral Sir Herbert King-Hall (Hutchinson, 21s.); "From Immigrant to Inventor," by Michael Pupin (Scribners, 7s. 6d.), a new

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edition of an often reprinted American autobiography; "Men in Women's Guise," by O. P. Gilbert (Bodley Head, 12s. 6d.), which contains biographies of the Abbé de Choisy and the Chevalier d'Éon among others.

Among educational books may be mentioned: "Our Public Elementary Schools," by Sir Michael Sadler (Thornton Butterworth, 1s. 6d.); "Dreams and Education," by J. C. Hill (Methuen, 4s.); "Tales for Teachers," by A. R. Williams (Daniel, 6s.).

The following are some religious books: "The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought," by W. R. Inge (Longmans, 4s.); "The Inescapable Christ," by W. R. Bowie (Murray, 6s.); "The Church and the Sex Question," by John W. Coutts (James Clarke, 6s.); "The Faith of Modernism," by Shailer Mathews (Macmillan, 6s. 6d.); "In Jacob Behman's School," by Harold W. Shephard (Dent, 3s. 6d.).

Under the title "Christianisme," a valuable series of historical and theological works is being published by Messrs. F. Rieder, of Paris. The outlook of the series is neither controversial nor directly religious, but scientific. Among the contributors are M. Loisy: "Les Actes des Apôtres"; M. Delafosse: "Le Quatrième Évangile," and "L'Épître aux Romains"; M. Félix Sartiaux: "Foi et Science au Moyen Âge"; M. Aulard: "Le Christianisme et la Révolution Française"; Professor Zielinski, of Warsaw: "La Sibylle"; and Don Miguel de Unamuno: "L'Agonie du Christianisme," a translation of an unpublished Spanish text. A parallel series, "Judaïsme," is contemplated; of which the first volume, a translation of Dr. Israel Abraham's "Permanent Values of Judaism" has appeared.

The same firm has lately published M. Houtin's autobiographical "Vie de Prêtre"; and his Life of the late M. Marcel Hébert: "Un Prêtre Symboliste." M. Houtin ranks high, not only as a historian, but as an ironist; as studies of contemporary Catholicism both books are of exceptional documentary importance, and have attracted deserved attention in France.

NOVELS IN BRIEF

Mape. By ANDRÉ MAUROIS. (Lane, 7s. 6d.)

Rendered exacting by the bitter enchantments of "Ariel," many are likely to complain that M. Maurois's new book conveys his possibilities but dimly. The wickedness of his method is obscured, and along with it much of his easy charm. The work of the reader is proportionately harder. In theme "Mape" is diametrically opposed to "Ariel," for M. Maurois has laboured to construct, and not to destroy, that world of illusion, so satisfying to the hungry imagination, in which frustrated human beings find their hopes realized. A rather irrelevant preface explains that "Mape" was the name given by a spoilt little girl to this ideal region. In the first story the creative writer, in the person of Goethe as author of "Werther," enters "Mape"; in the second a modern Frenchman escapes—to failure—from the actual by the gate of reading, regarding himself as the reincarnation of one of Balzac's lovers; the third—the barest story, no doubt the ripest in imaginary power and correspondingly the least successful of Mr. Eric Sutton's translations—discusses the love-stories of Thomas Laurence and the daughters of Mrs. Siddons, tragic circumstances which serve to shelter the flowering of the heart-broken mother's greatest artistic success, allowing us to see the world of illusion through eyes of a third type of dreamer. Obviously, such subjects have not the essential glamour which caused the life of Shelley to provoke M. Maurois's calm and drastic execution. At best he is compelled to turn them into plainer, drier fare, but in so doing he remains triumphantly a critic of life whom business could not make dull nor passion wild.

* * *

Cruises and Curses. By S. CLOUGH. (Selwyn & Blount, 6s.)

This is an extremely tedious book. Doubtless a good deal of practical advice to those who wish to own a small sailing-boat, or, having one, to equip it with a motor, is contained in the more informative patches, but the general impression left by this description of adventures up and down the Thames is wearisome. Fatality after fatality is indiscriminately recorded in a commonplace manner, and neither the enjoyment nor the education which the author may have wished to achieve and to pass on seems to have been perfectly attained.

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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

POLITICS—CENTRAL PROVINCES—HUDSON'S BAY—BRITISH—MEXICAN NOTES.

POLITICAL events this week have, on the whole, encouraged and satisfied the Stock Exchange.

War Loan has been a firm market at 99½ ex dividend. The provision in the Budget for the raising of the sinking fund this year from £50,000,000 to £60,000,000 really means that the Baldwin sinking fund of £50,000,000, which was raided last year to the extent of £10,000,000, has been kept intact. This provision has been recognized as a wise protection of British Government credit. The decision not to renew the Trade Facilities Act is another step in the same direction. Another political event was the Colonial Office announcement on the Rubber Restriction Scheme. The percentage exportable at the minimum rate of duty is maintained at 100. On the other hand, should the average price for the May-July quarter fall below 1s. 9d. per lb., the percentage exportable at the minimum rate of duty will be reduced to 80. This announcement has cheered the rubber market, and will probably go far to stabilize rubber prices at a higher level. It means that restriction has been eased at the top and made tighter at the bottom.

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cent. is expected. Relief from Dominion Income Tax was afforded to shareholders last year at the rate of 1s. 5d. in the £, and on this basis a dividend of 20 per cent., less tax, out of the Profit and Loss Account, together with a dividend of 2½ per cent., less tax, out of the Land Account, is equivalent to a gross dividend of 24.9 per cent., which would allow a return of £5 3s. per cent. on the old shares standing at £4 18s. 9d. Of the 1,500,000 £1 ordinary shares 500,000 were issued in January, 1926, at 70s. These are now 30s. paid, and are quoted at 51s. 6d. After May 31st, 1926, these new shares will rank for dividend with the old shares, and appear to be the cheaper purchase of the two.

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